

“*Eso es!* That's it!”: The Consumption, Identity, Representation,
and Production of *Maya & Miguel*

by

Emily S. Kinsky, M.A.

A Dissertation

In

MASS COMMUNICATIONS

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of Texas Tech University in
Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for
the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Approved

Amanda H. Gallagher, co-chairperson

Michael Parkinson, co-chairperson

Shannon Bichard

Tara Stevens

Margaret A. Price

Fred Hartmeister
Dean of the Graduate School

May, 2008

Copyright 2008, Emily S. Kinsky

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my family. Without them, this study would not have been completed.

Without my son, I likely would never have known about *Maya & Miguel*. It has been fun to see his interactions with the program change and grow as he has grown. Thank you for being patient, Josiah. I am so pleased with you.

Without my husband, I would not have had the time to complete this research. Thank you for taking care of Josiah. You have been an excellent “personal assistant,” as you described it. Because of you, I have had an incredible support system at home. You have put your dreams on hold for the last few years, and I am excited to see what the Lord has planned for you.

Without my parents, I would likely not have had the thought of going on to graduate school. You are the ones who instilled a great value and appreciation for education. Thank you for your support and encouragement.

Finally, I am nothing without the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for walking me through my life thus far – I am looking forward to the continuation of the journey.

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6

Acknowledgments

I could not have completed this dissertation without the investment of time by my committee members: Amanda H. Gallagher, Michael Parkinson, Shannon Bichard, Tara Stevens, and Margaret A. Price. Thank you for your support, your kindness, and your efforts on my behalf. I am particularly indebted to Dr. Gallagher for her guidance and encouragement from the beginning to the end. I could not, and would not, have done this without her.

Special thanks to the personnel and advisors connected with Scholastic Media who provided information about the show's creation: Beth Richman, Mindy Figueroa, Federico Subervi, Cheryl Gotthelf, and Linda Kahn.

Thank you to the participating families who allowed me into their homes and the chance to interview and observe them.

Thank you to my peer reviewers, Hyo Jin Kim and Marilda Oviedo, for helping catch those things that only a new set of eyes can see. Thank you to Kelly White for checking my Spanish and answering a number of questions related to translations.

Thank you to the College of Mass Communications, which provided a Graduate Student Research Grant, under the auspices of Regent Professors Tom Johnson and Kent Wilkinson, which allowed me to have the use of a digital recorder, transcription pedals, and software, among other things that greatly benefited this study.

Table of Contents

Dedication	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
Abstract.....	vi
I. Introduction.....	1
Children & Media Use	2
Children's Television Programming.....	3
Bilingual Children's Television Programming	6
<i>Maya & Miguel</i>	10
PBS Ready to Learn.....	15
Justification for the Study	16
II. Literature Review	21
History of Children's Educational Television.....	21
Children's Media Habits & Their Impact	24
Media Preferences by Mothers & Children.....	28
Minorities on Television	29
Children's Programming.....	34
Family Programming	40
III. Theoretical Framework.....	44
Cultural Studies	46
Views of the Audience	50
The Circuit of Culture.....	51
IV. Method.....	61
Research Questions.....	61
The Current Study.....	63
V. Context and Participant Information	78
Background of the Researcher.....	78
The Context	87
VI. Analysis	97
The Audience.....	98
The Producers.....	146
The Text	205
VII. Conclusion	298
The Circuit of Culture: Making Connections.....	298
Binary Oppositions	301
Limitations & Suggestions for Future Study.....	310
Works Cited	313
Appendix A: Parents' Consent Form	322
Appendix B: Children's Assent Form.....	323
Appendix C: Personnel Consent Form.....	324
Appendix D: Interview Guide for Children.....	325
Appendix E: Interview Guide for Parents:	327
Appendix F: Interview Guide for Personnel.....	329

Appendix G: Interview/Observation Participants	331
Appendix H: <i>Maya & Miguel's</i> Major Characters.....	333
Appendix I: Textual Analysis Guide.....	334
Appendix J: Episodes Evaluated in Textual Analysis.....	335
Appendix K: Entire List of <i>Maya & Miguel</i> Episodes.....	337
Appendix L: PBS Kids Programs	338
Appendix M: PBS Kids Go! Programs	339
Appendix N: PBS Ready to Learn	340
Appendix O: Audit Trail.....	341
Appendix P: Actors and Actresses Involved	342
Appendix Q: Theme Song Lyrics.....	343

Abstract

This qualitative case study is informed by cultural studies and seeks to examine the moments of consumption, identity, representation, and production of one particular children's television program, *Maya & Miguel*, using the *circuit of culture* (du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay, & Negus, 1997). These four moments from the *circuit of culture* were examined via in-depth interviews with children, parents, and Scholastic Media personnel; observations of children who regularly view the program; and a textual analysis of 12 episodes of *Maya & Miguel*.

The children who participated offered many details about the characters' clothing and accessories, but only one mentioned a character's skin color. The parents reported appreciating the representation of the family, while the children were particularly drawn to the use of humor and depiction of sports. The parents reported feeling safe allowing their children to watch this program because it is educational and is broadcast on PBS. Interviews with Scholastic-related personnel revealed the goals of the program, the process of creating the show, and the manner of promoting it.

The textual analysis revealed a number of binary oppositions within the text, including Hispanic:Non-Hispanic, young:old, and male:female. Several stereotypes were maintained, such as an ambitious Asian American student, but others were challenged, including a boy who is both athletic and artistic. There were also two characters with disabilities who might typically be ostracized in society but who were embraced in this text.

Chapter I

Introduction

Television is a common source of entertainment, education, and information across the United States. According to Kompare:

television, in fact, *is* our cultural heritage as postwar Americans; we are just loath to admit it. Television has long been the United States' top leisure activity, while *TV Guide* has been the most widely-circulated periodical. In short, television viewing is what Americans *do*. (2004, p. 106, emphasis in original)

Television viewing is woven into the fabric of contemporary Western society. Even in the 1970s, Raymond Williams (1974/1989) pointed out that “we have never as a society acted so much or watched so many others acting” (p. 3).

This qualitative study is informed by cultural studies and seeks to examine the moments of consumption, identity, representation, and production of one particular television program, *Maya & Miguel* (Forte, 2004), using the *circuit of culture* (du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay, and Negus, 1997). These four moments from the *circuit of culture* (consumption, identity, representation, and production) are examined via in-depth interviews with children, parents, and creators of the program; observations of children who regularly view the program; and a textual analysis of 12 episodes of *Maya & Miguel*. The *circuit of culture* fits well with the proposed study because of the examination of the representation of various people groups in the program; the identity or connections viewers make with the characters; the production of the program by Scholastic Media; and the consumption of the show by children and their parents.

Children & Media Use

Not only do U.S. adults spend their free time in front of the television, their children follow suit. According to Davies (2001), electronic media is “one of the most significant influences in the lives of modern children” (p. 79). According to Gentile and Walsh (2002), children in the United States watch an average of 25 hours per week of television, with 19% watching more than 35 hours a week. Thirty-eight percent of U.S. children, from age 2 to 17, have a television in their own bedrooms. From bedrooms to dining rooms and from malls to restaurants, television seems to be omnipresent in the United States.

According to Inglis (2003), there are good and bad aspects of television viewing by children:

Yes, television is full of snares. It can spring unsuitable material on innocent minds. . . . Looking back over the past fifty years, one would have to concede that the “box of delights” has not been an unmixed blessing. But there is no reason to be despondent. It is encouraging to recognize that children’s television does impart knowledge, it is both entertaining and instructive. (p. 188)

There are obviously some benefits to watching television. For example, according to Inglis (2003), “Television programmes of the sort produced by PBS, the BBC and Nickelodeon . . . can actually encourage young schoolchildren to read books, can help them with their literacy skills and even teach them better behavior” (p. 185).

Besides the content of television programming, one of the controversies surrounding televised media is its role in the home. For some households, the television is treated as a member of the family or perhaps a caregiver. Davies (2001)

made an interesting comment in that regard comparing the thoughts of U.S. citizens and the British: “the concept of children’s TV as trusted babysitter is a highly valued one in the UK, in contrast to the USA [*sic*] where ‘TV babysitter’ is a much more pejorative term” (p. 47). Despite its negative connotation in the United States, many U.S. parents still use it as such. According to Rideout, Vandewater, and Wartella (2003), 45% of the parents they surveyed said that it is “very or somewhat likely that they will use TV to occupy their child” while they do something else that needs to be done (p. 4).

It would be difficult to keep U.S. children from being exposed to media. Television/video screens are almost everywhere, including restaurants, stores, schools, and cars. Not only are children *exposed* to television, but statistics appear to show them being saturated with electronic media. Whether it is deemed appropriate or not, the television has become a de facto entertainer, educator, and care-giver.

Children’s Television Programming

Children’s television programming broadcast on U.S. commercial networks is concentrated during the weekend morning hours. Networks most commonly air their children’s programming for three hours between approximately 6 a.m. and noon on Saturdays. The Public Broadcasting System normally broadcasts children’s programming during morning hours (approximately 6:30 a.m. to noon) every day as well as weekday afternoons (approximately 2 to 5:30 p.m.). Commercial producers face the difficulty of attracting a large enough audience to stay on the air, while presenting material that is suitable and understandable to particular age groups.

According to Davies (2001), “the child audience . . . is a permanent minority” (p. 32). Within that minority, Davies explains that there are subgroups that a children’s television producer needs to reach; children have tremendously different needs and preferences at different stages in their lives. Perhaps because of the difficulty of pleasing such widely different desires and certainly because of the bottom-line impact, network television executives relegated children’s educational programming to one of the lowest items on their list of priorities for a long time (Kunkel, 2003).

Davies (2001) shares one of the arguments for the need for public broadcast television – “the market does not provide some kinds of minority-interest programming, such as shows aimed at Hispanic children, or Welsh children, or programmes about esoteric interests like classical music, or ‘unpopular’ topics, such as the news” (p. 43). The author argues that these programs are important for children because (1) they do not have enough experience to know what they need or even want, (2) their preferences will change as they age, and (3) there are some things in life that are good for them whether they enjoy them or not – “this is the case for special news programmes for children, for instance, and for programmes in which minorities are equally and sympathetically represented” (p. 43). I argue the present study of *Maya & Miguel* addresses a program that does exactly what Davies suggests public television can do – it presents a multi-cultural environment, which portrays minorities in a positive light (see Appendix H for more information about the characters of *Maya & Miguel*).

Davies (2001) proposes another reason why educational television is important for children:

there are plenty of aspects of adult life (leaving aside sex and crime) about which children need to be informed and which therefore need to be addressed in terms which are appropriate to their understanding and social and emotional status. These include the later stages of education; health; politics; citizenship . . . finance; employment; relationships with adults, parents, siblings, peers; and the culture generally – including the arts – the whole cultural capital of the society in which they live. (p. 47)

Educational television can help teach children about these areas. According to Davies (2001), children's programming not only is supposed to educate and entertain children in an aesthetically pleasing way, but "it has to help children in the task of growing up" (p. 58). For years, quality children's programming has been deemed unprofitable by commercial network television companies (Kunkel, 2003). Only because of the Children's Television Act of 1990 and the FCC's 1996 requirement for three hours a week of educational/informational programming have the major broadcast networks focused more attention on this audience. In the United States, PBS has historically taken on the greatest burden of children's educational programming. In 2007, PBS offered 27 original series for children. Each were broadcast depending on the local station's preferences ("More PBS Kids," 2007).

While there are now entire networks focused on children's programming, such as Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, and the Disney Channel, most of their shows are for entertainment purposes. In fact, a Nickelodeon executive commented that PBS views children as needing improvement, while Nickelodeon just wants them to celebrate their childhood (Minow & LaMay, 1995). Noggin, a cable channel launched

in 1999 by Viacom, and PBS Kids Sprout, a cable network launched in 2005, have begun to broadcast educational programming specifically for preschool children.

While these two channels have educational purposes, their target market is children from ages 2 to 5. For educational fare created for 6 to 12-year-olds, the target market for *Maya & Miguel*, PBS seems to be the only choice.

Programming designed for children's education and entertainment is important. I believe because children are a minority group without perceived power or prestige, educational programming designed for them has not been a priority by commercial stations. Thankfully this need has been fulfilled, at least in part, by public television.

Bilingual Children's Television Programming

One of the first programs to experiment with bilingual broadcast television on PBS was *Carrascolendas*, which aired from 1970 to 1976. The program was filmed at the University of Texas and originally was intended for children of Mexican descent living in Central Texas. It was somewhat like *Sesame Street* in that it took place in a fictional neighborhood with recurring characters – some dressed as typical adults and others in costumes, including the main character, a friendly lion. The program used stories and songs to teach Spanish language and culture. According to Barrera (2001), the creator of the program, “it became the first network bilingual television program in the United States to address the needs of Hispanic children and one of the earliest programs to do so within a multicultural context” (p. 4). The program was broadcast

by 82% of the PBS stations in the United States and won numerous awards (Barrera, 2001). Barrera (2001) explains her dream for *Carrascolendas*:

I wanted to reawaken Hispanic children to the possibilities encompassed in their dual heritage. I envisioned doing so through an artistic television creation which required their active participation. I had seen children's responses to television and knew the kinds of connections which the medium could bring to viewers. Those connections could help to reestablish a sense of community with an identifiable language and a commonality of ideas. A television series was a way of providing a semblance of mythological instruction, a way of bringing back the group to its central, unifying core. (p. 150)

Like *Maya & Miguel*, the producer of *Carrascolendas* also wanted her program to encourage prosocial behavior. While her audience was more likely to have Mexican heritage, similar to the creators of *Maya & Miguel*, she also wanted to address and edify all Hispanic groups. According to Barrera (2001),

we wanted the children viewers, whether they were Mexican American, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, or members of some other ethnic or racial community, to know that their larger identity included those other groups and that these relationships could be positive rather than negative. We dealt with these situations by having characters in the series that came from different countries. Their conversations explored the subject of distinct national origin, as well as what this meant in terms of vocabulary, foods, or customs. (p. 161)

While the live characters differ from the animated world of *Maya & Miguel*, Barrera's hopes for the program were amazingly similar to the goals of *Maya & Miguel's* producers: "I was interested in teaching both Hispanic and non-Hispanic children, and I wanted the learning experience to be conducive to expanding all children's awareness about cultural and linguistic backgrounds that were different from their own" (p. 88).

Barrera's creation of *Carrascolendas* came after producing bilingual language programs for KLRN (San Antonio) in the 1960s. These early programs, produced

from 1962 to 1968, were designed to help Spanish-speaking children with English.

Barrera (2001) explained the context of the 1950s and 1960s helped lead to the development of *Carrascolendas*:

Responding to the ethnic unrest of the 1950s and the War on Poverty and civil rights legislation enacted during the 1960s, the U.S. Office of Education, as part of Title VII, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Emergency School Assistance Act (ESAA), began programs in 1968 advocating the concept of bilingual education as an important part of the curriculum. (p. 110-111)

In 1968, Barrera submitted a grant request to the Office of Education asking for \$150,000 to aid in the production of 30 episodes. According to Barrera, Richard Goulet of the Office of Education told her she would need \$200,000 instead, which is what she received.

The ESAA funded other bilingual programs targeting Hispanic viewers, including two regional and three national programs (Barrera, 2001). While the government funding spurred the creation of a number of minority programs, it also “placed them in a quasi-ghetto within public broadcasting circles” and actually led to their failure (Barrera, p. 128). According to Barrera, the programs “were generally regarded as second-rate minority productions, to be tolerated but not supported over what was considered the standard and better quality PBS programming” (p. 128). The shows were often given less-than-favorable slots in the schedule and given less funding for promotions.

While the ESAA funds dried up in the late 1970s as new agendas rose to the forefront, Barrera points out that the “needs of ethnic and racial minority populations

did not end, and in a way, grew more pressing . . . this segment of the population remained largely excluded from television” (p. 131). According to Barrera, 20 years after the ESAA funding, there were no longer any PBS series that examined or taught language or cultural diversity, and the number of multicultural programs was below the population of such programs in 1976.

Recently, according to Moran (2007), the Federal Communication Commission determined “that the educational and informational needs of Spanish-speaking children are not being served by the US [*sic*] Spanish-language media” and levied a large fine on Univision of \$24 million for counting entertainment shows toward its mandated weekly number of three hours of educational/informational programming (p. 294). Moran described a trend of bilingual television, including Sorpresa!, a Spanish children’s network launched in 2003; V-me, the first Spanish equivalent of PBS that was launched in early 2007; bilingual networks SiTV and Mun2; and programs such as Nickelodeon’s *Dora the Explorer* (2000)¹, *Go, Diego, Go* (2005), *El Tigre: The Adventures of Manny Rivera* (2007), and Disney’s *Handy Manny* (2006). Moran expressed her concern, however, that much of the children’s programming on V-me is imported from Canada and the UK and simply dubbed into Spanish.

One of the programs listed above is a phenomenon unlike any other. *Dora the Explorer* can be seen almost everywhere. Dora is 7 years old and bilingual (Moran,

¹ Years of origin for *Dora the Explorer* (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0235917/episodes>) and *Go, Diego, Go* (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0423657/>) were found using the Internet Movie Database (IMDb). The other programs’ years of origin were included in Moran’s description.

2007). Each episode includes an adventure in which she must read a map and complete several tasks to reach a goal. She is accompanied by a monkey named Boots and is often thwarted by a fox named Swiper. *Go, Diego, Go* is a spin-off of this preschool hit, in which the 8-year-old Diego lives in a Latin American-looking country and has adventures rescuing animals (Moran, 2007). Moran (2007) points out that “although the creation of bilingual programs is market driven by the population growth of Latino children in the United States, the consequence of this diversification is significant for children of all ethnic backgrounds” (p. 297). *Maya & Miguel* is a bilingual program that has recently emerged in the U.S. children’s market.

Maya & Miguel

As discussed earlier, this study focuses on the children’s program *Maya & Miguel* (Forte, 2004). The program debuted in fall 2004 on PBS as part of the new PBS Kids Go! list of shows. This group of programs is geared toward 6- to 11-year-olds in an effort to keep the fans of *Sesame Street* watching the network as they grow older (Beth Richman, personal communication, December 9, 2005).

Maya & Miguel is the first original series produced by Scholastic Media (Cooney, 2004) and the first animated program to focus on a Latino² family (Smith, 2006). Scholastic obtained the largest grant ever given by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, \$9.2 million, to produce the series (Dei, 2003). In addition, PBS and the U.S. Department of Education granted another \$5 million for the production of this multicultural show (Dei, 2003).

² In general, I will use the term Hispanic to describe Spanish-speaking people; however, when sources use the term Latino, that term will be used.

Maya & Miguel centers on the daily adventures of Hispanic, 10-year-old fraternal twins in a generic U.S. city, which resembles New York. Maya is modeled after Lucille Ball in *I Love Lucy* (Cooney, 2004; Sigler, 2004). She is known for her big ideas that often go awry. Instead of a husband like Ricky, Maya has a slightly older twin brother, Miguel. During the show's theme song, Miguel is briefly shown playing the bongo drums – perhaps a brief homage to Desi Arnaz. Miguel is known for his sports prowess, particularly in soccer, basketball, and baseball, and his drawing skills.

While Maya is sometimes shown playing soccer (e.g., in “The Soccer Mom”), she is more often in the stands cheering for Miguel as he scores the goals or makes the homeruns. Maya is a problem solver and seems to be keen on relationship maintenance or building – for example, she attempts to help restore an insurance salesman's happiness in his work (“Career Day”), she sets her grandmother up on a blind date (“The Matchmaker”), she plans a camping trip for her family to reconnect (“Family Time”), she helps welcome new children to the neighborhood (“The Bully and the Bunny” and “When Maya Met Andy”), and she raises money for a local dance teacher to attend her class reunion (“The Dogwalkers”).

Maya and Miguel speak English and Spanish. Most of the Spanish seems to be spoken to each other or to other family members at home. They are shown at school, home, and in the neighborhood with their friends. They each have two main friends of the same sex, who often play major parts in the storylines. Maya's friends include Chrissy (Afro-Dominican descent) and Maggie (Chinese descent). The ethnic

identities of these two characters are evident in their interactions with other characters. Both of these girls, as well as Maya and Miguel, teach each other about their respective cultures. Maggie's cultural heritage seems to be mentioned more often in storylines than Chrissy's.

Miguel's friends include Theo (African American) and Andy (White; with a physical disability). The episode that introduces Andy's character discusses his disability, but it seems to be the only episode that does so. No storylines specifically discuss Andy's ethnicity. With regard to Theo, in one episode he visits an African exhibit in a museum and imagines himself as the major character in a painting. Like Andy, less attention is focused on Theo's ethnicity than on that of Maya and Miguel's immediate or extended family.

Maya and Miguel's immediate family is comprised of their parents, Santiago and Rosa Santos, and a pet parrot named Paco who all live in a large apartment consisting of a kitchen, dining room, living room, and separate bedrooms for Maya and Miguel. It seems safe to assume there is a third bedroom for the parents, though it is never shown. The apartment is situated above the family pet store. The grandmother, Abuela Elena, apparently lives in a separate apartment across the hall. There are times when Abuela Elena stays with the children in the Santos' apartment while the parents are evidently at work. Cousin Tito and his parents, Ernesto and Teresa, apparently live close, too, though their home is never shown. Tito speaks Spanish often and has a thicker accent than Maya and Miguel. Storylines involving

him generally teach about things specific to Mexican culture – from wrestling stars to mariachi bands.

Maya and Miguel's parents work in the pet store together and are often shown involved in their children's lives (waiting in line for concert tickets, coaching the soccer team, taking the kids to a museum, eating meals together, etc.). The grandmother, called Abuela or Abuelita, is also very close to her grandchildren. She speaks to them of her home in Mexico and teaches them how to make Mexican dishes. We learned in one episode that she and her deceased husband once owned a restaurant ("La Nueva Cocinita"). While she is drawn with two-toned gray hair and fits the role of a typical grandmother in many ways, her knowledge of the Internet defies common stereotypes of the elderly. In one episode, she tells Maya she is behind in updating her Web page.

While the program often includes storylines involving Miguel, the family, and the twins' friends, the central focus seems to be on Maya. According to Banet-Weiser (2004)

in the world of children's television, programs about self-confident, assertive, and intelligent girls such as Nickelodeon's 1991 hit, *Clarissa Explains it All* . . . initiated a new trend in programming that actively rejected the conventional industry wisdom that children's shows with girl leads could not be successful. (p. 120)

Maya & Miguel appears to follow this trend by painting Maya as a confident and smart girl who tries to shepherd her brother and friends through the minor crises they face.

According to Smith (2006), *Maya & Miguel* “excels in offering a guide for children’s television producers by celebrating diverse cultures and identities and, further, by having them validated due to their very existence on our most ubiquitous popular culture form – the television show” (p. 110). Univision’s top anchorman, Jorge Ramos, even wrote an editorial about the show and discussed its popularity with his son and its potential impact on the Latino community. Referring to the sale of the program to other countries, Ramos (2005) stated, “It is, without a doubt, one of the best exported products that this country has to offer” (n.p.). According to Ramos, “Maya and Miguel emphasize three things: the importance of family, of our Latin American culture, and of being bilingual. However, they do this in a very entertaining way, without giving us moralistic affairs and without exaggerating their Hispanic pride” (n.p.). He also pointed out the natural-sounding scripts: “I really like the realistic way that these ten year-old twins talk . . . they sprinkle their conversation with Spanish words. It is to say that they talk exactly like our second and third generation Latino youths” (Ramos, 2005, n.p.).

This program stands out from other children’s programming because of its target audience’s age, its use of Spanish within context, its educational purpose – the goal to teach English to Spanish-speaking children, and its portrayal of the Santos family and their friends, including various minority groups. These groups include Hispanics, the elderly, African Americans, Chinese, women, children, and people with disabilities.

PBS Ready to Learn

PBS Ready to Learn Television Service began in 1995 with funding from the U.S. Department of Education. Ready to Learn “supports the development of children’s educational television programs and online resources, and annually provides about 9,500 workshops for approximately 160,000 parents and early childhood educators” (“PBS Ready to Learn”, n.p.). According to PBS, Ready to Learn broadcasts are disseminated to 93 million U.S. households, including 37 million children.

Besides *Maya & Miguel*, the U.S. Department of Education has financially supported the production of *Arthur*, *Dragon Tales*, *Clifford the Big Red Dog*, *Between the Lions*, *Reading Rainbow*, *Sesame Street*, and *Postcards from Buster* through Ready to Learn Television cooperative agreements with PBS. PBS currently has 27 series for children. These programs are designed to help children in cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development (“PBS KIDS,” n.p.). The program block that houses *Maya & Miguel* is called PBS Kids Go! This block of shows began in October 2004 targeting early elementary school children. Other programs in this block are *Postcards from Buster*, *Cyberchase*, and *Arthur*. On the local PBS affiliate in the main setting for the current research project, this block runs from 3 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. weekdays and also includes *Clifford the Big Red Dog*. Beginning at 5 p.m. each day, *Maya & Miguel* is the final show in the daily block.

Justification for the Study

This study examines the *circuit of culture*'s (du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay, & Negus, 1997) moments of production, identity, representation, and consumption (see Figure 1, p. 54) with regard to the children's television program *Maya & Miguel*. I have found no studies relating children's programming to du Gay et al.'s *circuit of culture*, so the purpose of this study is to fill that gap in the literature (the circuit will be discussed in more detail in the theory and method sections).

This research should add to the literature of television studies, especially in the area of children's programming. It should also complement scholarship concerned with minority portrayals on television and those involving the impact of media on children. In addition, it will add to the literature examining public broadcasting, which Dornfeld (1998) pointed to as an area with a "dearth of scholarly attention" (p. 6).

One area of research that is closely tied with television's influence on children is based on Cultivation Theory. While this theory is not directly connected with the *circuit of culture*, it does provide further support for study in this area. According to Gerbner, the "father" of cultivation theory (1999):

Stories socialize us into roles of gender, age, class, vocation and life-style, and offer models of conformity or targets for rebellion. They weave the seamless web of the cultural environment that cultivates most of what we think, what we do, and how we conduct our affairs. (p. ix)

It is worth examining children's programs, such as *Maya & Miguel*, to determine how they might be socializing our children and impacting our families. The literature in the area of children's programming seems limited compared to youth and adult

programming, and yet, I believe this is the most vulnerable audience – the audience members with the most to gain or lose from their experience with television.

Another famed theory that offers support to a study of children and television is Social Cognitive Theory. This theory speaks to the educational powers of television, among other sources of modeling behavior. From years of study, Bandura and his colleagues have found support for their hypotheses that children are affected by behavior modeled before them (e.g., Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961). One of their early studies pointed to the possibility of influence from mediated models as well as those in the children's presence (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963). This theory offers support for the idea that what is shown on television does matter.

Justification of Methods

In addition to observations and textual analysis, in-depth interviews with the viewers of *Maya & Miguel* are an appropriate research method for this study. As Fisherkeller (2002) says, "Why talk with young people about TV? It is important to talk *with* children and adolescents to counter the nature of much public discourse that talks *about* them and their interactions with popular media such as television" (p. 2, emphasis in original). Fisherkeller also speaks of a television culture that surrounds our children. Television's enormous presence in U.S. children's culture also adds to the importance of this study.

Social impact. According to Kompare (2004), "during the seventies television began to be understood as not only a set of psychic triggers, but also as a bearer of myth, history, and social representation" (p. 119). Races, age groups, gender roles, and

other groupings of people are portrayed in the media in general, and in *Maya & Miguel* in specific. It is worth studying these portrayals because of the impact they may have on the psyche of our youth. According to Signorielli (2004), “for those who do not regularly interact with minorities, television tells its audience about these groups and how they may be similar and/or different from other people” (p. 297). Kompare (2004) states that “this significant thesis – that individual television texts matter to the culture – would become a fundamental principle of critical television study” (p. 121).

Programs such as *Maya & Miguel* may impact entire families, as well as individual children. According to Inglis (2003):

the fact that families like watching other families on screen has led some television analysts to suggest that the sight of a group of happy parents and children enjoying a barbecue or a neighbourhood party together, as they often did in *The Flintstones*, gives reflected pleasure to family viewers. . . . My own guess is that viewing programmes together probably does help family cohesiveness but in ways that are beneath the surface and quite subtle. (p. 136)

It is worth examining how parents and children view the program and react to it. Inglis says that “children and grown-ups bring entirely different sets of expectations and criteria to the television viewing process” (p. 174). This offers support for my method of interviewing both children and their parents about the show.

The fact that *Maya & Miguel* is a bilingual, bicultural program may impact families even more than Inglis’ example of *The Flintstones*. According to Moran (2007):

The increasing options for those who choose Spanish-language programming are, for some, a welcome change to the US [*sic*] media environment. In particular, young Latinos longing for the chance to see their reality reflected on television are finding new options. Parents who want their children to remain connected with their Latino culture and the Spanish language can encourage the viewing of Latino-themed programs. For Latino children, seeing their culture represented on television can be empowering and invigorating and they may gain more self-assurance because of the heritage they share with the characters on TV. The programs, especially *Maya & Miguel*, make being bilingual “cool” so that children who come to the television with this experience will feel validated because of the representation of their culture. Non-Latino children who are currently exposed to *Maya & Miguel* and *Dora the Explorer* may be more accepting of and interested in the Latino culture. (p. 299)

Because of the growth in Latino-themed or Spanish-language programming, Moran (2007) encourages media scholars to investigate this trend “in order to determine the role television may have in teaching children of all ethnicities to navigate the world in which they live” (p. 299).

I believe television representations of people can influence viewers’ thoughts toward other races, ages, sexes, and more. Television is part of our culture, and even an examination of one series can help us better understand how we make meaning from television texts in our lives. In my own life, television texts have played an ever-present role. As the mother of a 4-year-old boy, I am a frequent viewer of children’s television shows. As I began watching *Maya & Miguel* with my son in 2005, I became fascinated with its approaches to family, language, and disability, in particular. I was impressed with the respect for elders shown and the support demonstrated toward siblings, cousins, and friends. The seamless insertion of Spanish made me wonder how the writers made decisions about what to insert where. This is what first prompted my contact with Scholastic Inc. related to another research project on the topic of bilingual

media. I also wondered what other parents and children were noticing about the program and how their thoughts would compare to mine.

Contents. This dissertation includes a review of the literature with regard to children's educational television, children's media habits, the impact of television use on children, minority portrayals on television, and research involving specific children's and family television programs. After the literature review, I examine the theoretical framework of the study, including an explanation of culture, cultural studies, and the *circuit of culture*. I then present the research questions, followed by an explanation of the methods, including a description of the context of the study, the sample, the specific methods used (interviews, observations, and textual analysis), and the coding process. I share details from my observations, interviews, and textual analysis and end with my conclusions.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Related literature involves both quantitative and qualitative studies in areas including media habits, family media preferences, minority representations, representations of family relationships, history and production of children's television, and studies of specific children's programs, such as *Teletubbies*, *Dragon Tales*, and *Between the Lions*. Certain studies in this review of the literature also reflect the specific methods used in this particular project: interviews, observations, and textual analysis. I have found no other studies connected to *Maya & Miguel*.

History of Children's Educational Television: United Kingdom and United States

Much of the literature about children's television comes from the United Kingdom. In Britain, children's television began after World War II. Many children had been separated from their parents during the war, so part of the thinking behind these particular programs was to give children a treat and something "reassuring and soothing with the aid of puppets, marionettes, teddy bears and soft strokings of piano keys" (Inglis, 2003, p. 18). The British evidently differed from those in television in the United States concerning what children's programming should be like. According to Inglis (2003), children's televised shows should be, "nothing shattering. The more abrasive animation of the Disney kingdom across the Atlantic, of cat fights and wily, stroppy mice, was not for British children" (p. 18).

According to Inglis (2003), Freda Lingstrom was the head of Children's Programmes for the BBC from 1951 to 1956. She saw children's television "rather like handing children comforting cups of hot chocolate at regularly, carefully timed intervals.

Nothing, said Lingstrom, was to be ‘frightening, cruel or vulgar’. Above all, it was not to be American” (Inglis, 2003, p. 25). In the early 1950s, Lingstrom launched *Watch With Mother*. According to Inglis, this was the first children’s program specifically designed to entertain and educate a particular age group, in this case, children under 6-years-old. Inglis suggests that this program was “the progenitor of the most effective ‘fun-cum-learning’ programmes of the future: *Sesame Street* and *Teletubbies*” (p. 29).

Children’s programming was not part of the original offerings on radio or television. According to Inglis (2003):

the idea that childhood deserved special protection did not really take root until shortly before the Second World War; and the concept that they should have entertainment of their own was entirely new (good books for children had been written before this, but they normally only reached the middle classes). So BBC Radio’s *Children’s Hour*, introduced in the forties, and then television’s *Watch with Mother* of the fifties were truly revolutionary. (p. 117)

Much has changed since then. As mentioned above, there are entire networks devoted to children now.

British and U.S. citizens have had differing opinions about many aspects of children’s television. According to Inglis (2003), “despite the differences in ideology [between U.S. and British child protection movements], there was common agreement that children were not to be treated as consumers-in-miniature but as a vulnerable group requiring special attention and protection” (p. 154). Parents and activists on both shores have noticed problems with television programming. Inglis (2003) believes that the U.S. Children’s Television Act of 1990 and the Telecommunications Act of 1996, “strengthened parents’ hands” by requiring stations to broadcast three hours of

educational/informational programming per week in order to renew their FCC licenses (p. 184).

Educational/informational television programming is important because what we watch may affect how children act (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963) or how they perceive the world around them (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). Often television programs, particularly public television programs, offer direct or indirect lessons about dealing with “others” (see Dornfeld, 1998).

The revolution of children’s programming in the United States began with *Sesame Street* in 1969. Mandel (2006) offered a historical perspective on *Sesame Street*, a program which encourages treating “others” well. Mandel (2006) explained how Joan Ganz Cooney began investigating the value of children’s educational programming for underprivileged children under a grant from the Carnegie Corporation. Cooney’s report submitted to Carnegie and published in 1967 was the inspiration for this classic children’s program. According to Mandel, *Sesame Street* was funded almost equally by private corporations (e.g., Carnegie) and by the U.S. government; the first year’s funding came to around \$8 million, including the planning and creation of 130 hour-long shows. Like Scholastic Media did for *Maya & Miguel*, the Children’s Television Workshop brought together a team of experts to advise the direction and production of *Sesame Street*.

They decided to use brief segments that would be repeated to reinforce the information being taught. Mandel explained that these were compared to advertisements, and each episode held 40 to 50 of them. The overall goals of *Sesame Street* were classified under four headings: symbolic representation, cognitive processes, social

environment, and physical environment (Mandel, 2006). The creators not only wanted to teach children, but they wanted to involve their parents. According to Mandel (2006), various notable people were invited to appear on the program in order to “lure [parents] into spending more time with their children” (p. 7-8). After being on the air for nearly 40 years, debates about *Sesame Street*’s impact on children linger.

Children’s Media Habits & Their Impact

Children’s media habits continue to be a much-discussed topic. Using a random telephone survey of 1,065 U.S. parents, Rideout et al. (2003) found that 83% of children between birth and 6-years-old use screen media (television and computers) on an average day. Rideout et al.’s study, which was performed under the auspices of Kaiser Family Foundation, showed that 74% of children under 2-years-old have viewed television at some point and 59% in that same age bracket watch an average of 2 hours and 5 minutes each day. According to Rideout et al. (2003):

Many of these toddlers and preschoolers are not just passively consuming media chosen by other members of their homes – they are actively asking for and helping themselves to what they want. They are turning on the TV by themselves (77%), asking for particular shows (67%), using the remote to change channels (62%), asking for their favorite videos or DVDs (71%), putting in their own music tapes or CDs (36%), hopping up to the computer by themselves (33%), loading their own CD-ROMs (23%), and for some, even asking for specific websites while surfing the Net (12%). (p. 4)

As such, this pervasive use of media by children has prompted a number of studies.

Gentile and Walsh (2002) performed a normative study of 527 parents of children ranging in age from 2 to 17. They found that positive scores on a family’s media use index were significantly and positively correlated to their children’s school performance. The researchers used indexes for six categories: media use, parental monitoring, consistency in rules about media use, media effects on children reported by parents,

familiarity with media ratings and possible media effects, and alternative activities engaged in by the families. They found that children with televisions in their bedrooms had worse grades in school and worse ratings on the categories listed above than those children without a television in the bedroom. A large number (33%) of the parents asked by Gentile and Walsh (2002) said their children sometimes imitate characters they have viewed on television, while 9% said their children often do so. A majority of parents (58%) interviewed said they agree or strongly agree that they “have seen media have a positive effect on my children” (p. 170). Even more (61%) agreed or strongly agreed that they “have seen media have a negative effect” on their children (Gentile & Walsh, 2002, p. 170). By these and other researchers, support has been found for the hypothesis that television impacts children’s attitudes and behavior.

Schmitt, Woolf, and Anderson (2003) also examined how families use media through in-home observations. They specifically focused on the use of television and what viewers did while the television is on. The researchers videotaped 50 participants as they watched television in their homes. The participants included children and adults who were observed during a 10-day period. They found that women were more likely to do chores while watching television than children or men, and the women were more likely to do so during a show’s programming rather than during advertisements. Two-year-olds were more active during the regular program instead of during the commercial breaks. Older children tended to behave in the reverse; their activity increased during advertisements. The most common non-viewing activity for each age group was social interaction, which occurred most often during commercial breaks. One of the most interesting findings from Schmitt, Woolf, and Anderson’s study was “in contrast to

suggesting that television viewing is an isolating experience, our findings suggest that television use was quite social, with fully a quarter of television use occupied by some social activity” (p. 276). Their study is important because, according to the authors, this was the first examination of television viewing behaviors conducted within the home environment.

With regard to impact, according to the literature, television programming designed merely for entertainment has tended to show negative results in children’s cognitive abilities (Wright et al., 2001). The viewing of entertainment programming has also demonstrated the promotion of less social interaction in children (Huston, Wright, Marquis, & Green, 1999), and has been linked to childhood obesity (Dennison, Erb, & Jenkins, 2002). On the other hand, educational, age-appropriate electronic media have demonstrated positive influences such as prosocial interactions (Friedrich-Cofer, Huston-Stein, Kipnis, Susman, & Clewett, 1979), increased vocabulary (Rice, Huston, Truglio, & Wright, 1990), higher academic skills (Wright et al., 2001), and better overall academic achievement (Anderson, Huston, Schmitt, Linebarger, & Wright, 2001).

Early in the history of television, Bandura and his colleagues demonstrated that children’s behavior could be affected by what they watched (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963); if they watched aggressive behavior on television, they were more likely to be aggressive, but if they watched prosocial behavior on television, their aggressive behavior could be reduced and prosocial behavior could be encouraged.

Over the years, Bandura’s research has shown that observational learning is not limited to mere mimicry, however (Miller, 2002). Children can go beyond direct imitation to the creation of complex new behavior or the modification of previous

behavior. Besides demonstrating behavior, models can also instruct, motivate, inhibit, or disinhibit a child's behavior (Bandura, 1989). Bandura developed a model that helps explain behavioral change called *triadic reciprocal causation* (Bandura, 1986). Three interdependent factors influence one another: the biological and psychological aspects of people (P), their behavior (B), and their environment (E). This model helps clarify that learning and behavior are much more complicated than simple stimulus and response. Within the person part of the model is the idea of agency. For example, not all children will respond the same way to a violent program; they have the power, the agency, to decide how they will absorb what they have observed and whether and how they will use that new knowledge (Bandura, 2001). Based on Bandura's theory, "Young viewers can learn a great deal from these [televised] images: social skills, vocabulary, language, dress code, gender roles and gender relationships, racial stereotypes" (Muuss, 1996, p. 287).

Though agency may play a role in what programs children choose to watch and how they attend to the messages, there is still an impact to consider. According to Mullan (1996), "although individuals 'read' programmes in varied and different ways, television nonetheless has the potential to influence viewers' beliefs, and possibly their behaviour, in respect of racial and ethnic issues" (p. 6). Stam and Shohat (1994) insist that media can "exoticize" and "otherize" cultures, but they can also inspire "multicultural coalitions" (p. 301). These researchers' comments echo Social Cognitive Theory in that modeled behavior is often imitated by children watching. This theory helps justify my assertion that this is an area worth studying because it suggests that perhaps children can learn how to relate to others of different races or age groups by watching various characters interact on television.

Gerbner (1997) expressed concern about portrayals on television and the possible impact on children. According to Gerbner, “Who is cast in what role and assigned what fate in the world of television sends the most pervasive messages to our children about life’s values, rewards, penalties, and risks” (p. 69-70). While my study does not follow the protocol of cultivation research, which requires message system analysis (content analysis) and cultivation analysis (survey) to detect how televised messages have been received and have affected viewers, cultivation theory *does* speak to similar concerns of television’s influence on children.

As these researchers have shown, many U.S. children are watching television beginning at very early ages. Studies show children are often the ones selecting the media they use. Those children who are left to determine what and when they watch television in their own bedrooms have been shown to make lower grades. Watching television is not necessarily a negative activity, nor a passive one. People have been found to interact socially, as well as completing chores while television programs are playing. While children do not seem to be positively affected by watching their parents’ programs, they do tend to learn beneficial information from educational programs targeted to their age group. Social Cognitive Theory and Cultivation Theory speak to the potential power of televised programs.

Media Preferences by Mothers and Children

Nikken and Van Der Voort (1996; 1997) performed two related studies examining families’ preferences for children’s television programming. In 1996, the researchers performed a telephone survey asking mothers of 3- to 12-year-olds ($n = 357$) what aspects of a program were most important when considering it for their children.

Participants were randomly selected from a representative data bank (n = 10,000) of the Audience Research Department of the Netherlands Broadcasting Corporation consisting of people who had agreed to be interviewed on the topic of radio and television. A factor analysis revealed the top three standards were: comprehensibility, aesthetic quality, and promotion of involvement. When performing this study from the children's perspective in 1997 using children from five primary schools in Holland, the researchers found the top qualities reported by their 9- to 12-year-old participants (n = 427) were comprehensibility and aesthetic quality of television programs.

These preferences stated by mothers and their children relate to the current study with regard to the interview questions for my own participants, which include queries about parents' and children's reasoning for choosing to watch *Maya & Miguel*.

Minorities on Television

According to Dornfeld (1998), "public television is a primary arena in American public culture for the representation of images of cultures outside our nation's borders, or of non-mainstream cultures within them" (p. 140). Because minority groups are smaller by definition, there are not enough minority viewers to financially support most of these programs on commercial television. Yet it is important for these minorities to be represented on this mass medium. According to Dornfeld (1998):

the various texts and genres in American public culture involved with the representation of cultural others might be considered a form of anthropology. These texts articulate either explicit arguments or implicit ideologies about what constitutes the cultures of other places and peoples, what constitutes "mainstream" American culture, and the relationships of difference and similarity between these constructs. (p. 141)

Hispanics, African Americans, Chinese, children, elderly, women, and people with physical disabilities are minority groups represented on the children's program *Maya & Miguel*.

Signorielli (2004) examined minority portrayals with relation to the presentation of aging on prime-time television. She found that women and girls in racial/ethnic minorities were more likely to be younger, rather than older characters on prime time. Signorielli also found that older women were more likely to be on the sidelines of prime-time stories rather than being major characters.

Further work on minority representations was performed by Mastro and Stern in 2003. These researchers performed a content analysis of advertisements displayed during prime-time television. They found that African Americans were present in advertising at a similar rate to their population in the United States, but Asian Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans were far below their population percentages. The researchers also noted that when these groups were present in advertisements, their portrayals were sometimes negative. Latinos were found in only 1% of the advertisements' speaking parts, and those characters tended to be portrayed in a sexual manner. According to Mastro and Stern, "In applying SCT [Social Cognitive Theory], Latinos exposed to these ads may learn to identify physical appearances and sexuality rather than intellect, for example, as the most important components of self" (p. 645). According to this study, Asian Americans, similarly, might see themselves as only valued for their work.

More recently, Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, and Kopacz (2008) found that the portrayals of Latinos can impact White viewers' feelings toward themselves and others. According to the authors, "media images become part of the ongoing negotiation of

identity by supporting and enhancing important aspects of self-image” (p. 4). The researchers used two experiments to test White viewers’ reactions after reading a script (conditions: ambiguous, stereotype, counter-stereotype) or watching a television program (conditions: ambiguous, stereotype, control – no video) that focused on either a White or Latino character. Participants’ in-group identification with their race was pre-tested and treated as an independent variable. The dependent variables they examined included the viewers’ estimation of the character’s abilities to graduate from high school and their own self-esteem. Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, and Kopacz (2008) concluded:

The manifestations of in-group favoritism and esteem maintenance found in the ambiguous media condition indicate that viewers may derive normative cues from television content and use these to guide their racial expressions. . . . Mediated interracial contact, therefore, can be seen to function in much the same way as intergroup contact by providing norms that guide racial judgments and support identity maintenance. (p. 19-20)

Other authors have expressed similar interest in racial/cultural representations on television and how they can impact viewers.

Berry (2003) used Social Cognitive Theory to inform his exploration of how children may be influenced by multicultural representations on television. The author discussed the diversity in the United States including “data showing that the population is increasingly aging, people with disabling conditions are seeking more opportunities, and women presently represent one of the growing groups entering the labor force of the future” (p. 361). Berry explained his view of television as a potential cause and cure for multicultural strife. According to Berry:

among all of the mass media developing around children today, there is one medium that is still a powerful audiovisual and potentially interactive communicator of both positive and negative cross-cultural attitudes, beliefs, and values for developing children. That medium, with its special power and attractiveness for children, is television. (p. 362)

Berry concluded that “it is important that we help children to be wise consumers of the media that will surround them from the time they are born” (p. 365). *Sesame Street* is one program which has attempted to help children from an early age.

Mandel (2006) examined the first five years of *Sesame Street*’s development, focusing on its creation of a “beloved community” of equality between racial groups and sexes (p. 4). A connection between *Sesame Street* and *Maya & Miguel* can be seen in the representation of the Hispanic community and the use of Spanish. Beginning in *Sesame Street*’s third season, Mandel (2006) said that Spanish was used to send a message to Spanish-speaking children that their language was valued. According to Mandel, “CTW [Children’s Television Workshop] aimed to attract Hispanic viewers, and at the same time, validate the Spanish language and culture through television” (p. 10). Mandel concluded that while *Sesame Street* has portrayed “the beloved community” of peace among multiple cultures for many years, that community has yet to become a reality outside of television.

Douglas (2003) also reviewed the portrayal of minorities, specifically the elderly and African Americans, but the author focused on multiple television families. While older adults are probably not the first minority group to come to people’s minds, they are considered a minority by a number of researchers (e.g., Douglas, 2003; Dyer, 1999). According to Douglas, “until recently, both [African Americans and the elderly] occupied minor and often negative roles on television, largely as a function of public sentiment” (p. 136). Douglas used the example of the television program *Blondie*, in which older characters were rare, and when they *were* present they were portrayed in a negative light (i.e. Dagwood’s boss). Douglas makes a connection between the lack of older characters

and African Americans on television and the composition and purpose of the suburbs, which were often the settings for television programs; “the emerging communities were intended for young White couples and their newly born or soon-to-be-born children” (p. 148). Although the number of African American television families has increased, according to Douglas (2003), White families are still “grossly overrepresented” and racial “groups other than African Americans remain essentially absent” (p. 144).

According to Douglas (2003), studies in the 1970s showed between 5% and 13% of prime-time television characters were elderly. More recent studies have found results varying from 2% to 17% (Douglas, 2003). Besides their rarity on prime time, older adults are also uncommon on cartoons. Bishop and Krause (1984) found only 7% of the characters on cartoons airing on the three major networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) in 1981 were older adults, and 1/100 plot lines focused on the “old.” According to Douglas (2003):

the bulk of evidence encourages the conclusion that the elderly are not widely present on television and become less visible as they grow older. Even most contemporary investigations suggest that the elderly are not routinely featured on television, regardless of whether the analysis deals with prime-time programming, non-prime-time programming, or children’s programming. (p. 150)

Some studies have shown positive portrayals of older adults. Douglas (2003) stated that “older people are frequently portrayed in ways that imply activity, independence, optimism, and virility. Moreover, elderly characters appear, in a larger sense, to act appropriately” (p. 152). There is a gender gap, however; according to Douglas, “female characters are generally younger than males, female characters comprise a comparatively smaller proportion of television’s elderly population, and older women tend to be portrayed in negative ways, whereas older men are portrayed positively” (p. 153).

Harwood and Anderson (2002) also found that prime-time network television included fewer older adults, as well as children, female characters, and Hispanic characters. Signorielli (2004), too, found elderly characters were underrepresented on prime-time network television. According to Signorielli, “there are so few vibrant and interesting role models” in the middle to older age categories on television (p. 280) that the “message of aging on prime-time television is one that celebrates youth while relegating the elderly to a smaller percentage of available roles” (p. 295).

These studies focus on the televised representations of various races, cultures, genders, and more. They discuss the importance of portraying people of different groups in order to encourage prosocial behavior between the groups in real life. They also offer a glimpse at the portrayal of minorities on children’s educational television. This is directly connected to *Maya & Miguel* because of the program’s multicultural and multigenerational cast of characters and its focus on education.

Children’s Programming

Research is limited in certain areas of children’s programming. There have been studies of shows using live people and puppets, such as *Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood*, *Teletubbies*, and *Sesame Street*, but not as many research projects have focused on a children’s educational animated program (e.g., *Dragon Tales*).

Craig and Wilhelm (1990) examined the semiotic structures found in the children’s programs *Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood* (PBS), *Today’s Special* (CBC-TV), and *Mr. Dressup* (CBC-TV). They viewed 15 episodes from each of these three series spread across the years from 1975 to 1986. Their research focused on the production of the programs, specifically the shots and scenes used. They concluded that “educational

television programs developed to transmit information about intrapersonal awareness and development of interpersonal understanding and cooperation to a target audience aged two to eight should rely on the visually simpler scene and shot structures” (p. 335).

Buckingham (2002) studied a successful children’s program found on the BBC and PBS, *Teletubbies*. According to the author (2002):

Teletubbies blurs the boundaries between the public and the private; between education and entertainment; and between child and adult audiences. In this respect, it could perhaps be taken as merely another manifestation of postmodern culture. And yet the programme also displays significant continuities with children’s programmes of the past. (Buckingham, p. 38)

Buckingham said that *Teletubbies* was created to reach children 5 and under in order to help prepare them for entering school, especially because of “baseline testing,” which had been introduced in Britain for 4-year-olds. He explained that “according to official statements, the programme aims to build confidence and self-esteem; to celebrate individuality; to build children’s imagination and sense of humor; and to encourage participation and movement” (p. 50). With regard to diversity on this show, Buckingham stated that two of the Tubbies are male and two female, and one has darker skin.

According to the author, on *Teletubbies*, “overt moral messages . . . are very rare. For the most part, conflict is either avoided or left unresolved” (Buckingham, p. 51). He also said that “broadly speaking . . . adult authority is far from wholly accepted in the world of the *Teletubbies*” (Buckingham, p. 53). In Buckingham’s (2002) estimation,

Teletubbies – and the controversy it has provoked – may also reflect much broader tendencies in children’s media culture. Of course, entertainment is always educational, in the sense that it is bound to teach us *something*; and education has to be entertaining in some way, at least if it is to succeed in engaging learners. (p. 55, emphasis in original)

Teletubbies has been a hit with children and a mystery to many adults.

Another children's program that is mainly live-action like *Teletubbies* is *Between the Lions*. Two studies funded in part by PBS station WGBH Educational Foundation (Boston) were performed to examine the media effects of this PBS children's program, which focuses on beginning readers (age 4 to 7). The show employs puppets to teach letters and words using stories and songs. The program takes place on a set made to appear as a library and focuses on Lionel and Leona, two lion cubs, and their parents, Cleo and Theo.

Linebarger (2000) performed quantitative and qualitative research to test *Between the Lions'* effectiveness in increasing viewers' literacy and its appeal with young children. Participants were 79 kindergarteners and 85 first graders in the Kansas City area. The control and experimental groups were filled by using stratified sampling based on each student's grade and class. Students were interviewed about the program and tested on "concepts of print, phonemic awareness, and letter-sound correspondences," and parents and teachers were questioned about these children's media activities and behaviors (p. 3). Children were evaluated three times: before viewing the program, after eight episodes were viewed, and after seeing 17 episodes. Students in kindergarten who viewed *Between the Lions* showed significantly better results on reading post-tests than those who did not watch the program.

Prince, Grace, Linebarger, Atkinson, and Huffman (2002) also researched the literacy potential for *Between the Lions*. This project involved experiments and surveys of approximately 1,000 preschool, kindergarten, and first grade students and 50 teachers. Those in the experimental group viewed two episodes or more of *Between the Lions* each week from October 1 to April 30. Related activities were done in their classrooms and the

children read books related to those episodes. Various literacy tests were administered to 285 randomly selected students from the experimental group. The authors found that those children who viewed the program regularly and whose teachers led related activities outperformed the control group's reading skills with significant results.

Between the Lions is not the only show to have demonstrated positive effects on children. Three studies of *Dragon Tales* were described in "Highlights from the *Dragon Tales* Summative Evaluation." *Dragon Tales* is a PBS Ready to Learn show that is targeted toward children ages 2 to 6. The goal of the program is to assist children in meeting social, emotional, physical, and cognitive challenges. Two groups watched the program in a school setting, while one group watched the show at home. There were control groups for each. Children viewed 20 episodes of the program, and then assessments of the children were made by parents, teachers, and researchers. According to the findings, "viewers significantly increased the frequency with which they chose to do challenging tasks, started or organized play with others, shared with their peers, and cooperated with others in comparison to a control group that watched a different educational program" ("Highlights", n.p.). In the home-viewing situation, parents who watched *Dragon Tales* with their children were more likely to report that watching the program put their children in a good mood than parents whose children watched other programs.

Other educational programs that have been studied include PBS' *Sesame Street* and Nickelodeon's *Blue's Clues* and *Dora the Explorer*. Rice et al. (1990) examined the impact of watching *Sesame Street* on children's vocabulary using a longitudinal study spanning two years. Using two cohorts of children: age 3 to 5 (n = 160) and age 5 to 7 (n

= 166), researchers asked the families to keep television viewing diaries for one week on five separate occasions approximately six months apart. Before the study began and any diaries were distributed, the researchers performed an interview with one of each child's parents and gave the child a vocabulary test (PPVT). The same vocabulary test was administered to the children within three months after the diary portion of the study was complete. The results showed support for the hypothesis that watching *Sesame Street* furthers children's vocabulary. These contributions, based on Rice et al.'s results, are independent of demographic factors. The researchers also found that the prime period for vocabulary development from *Sesame Street* was in the earlier cohort, between age 3 and 5, because of the level of vocabulary presented on the program.

Crawley et al. (2002) examined *Blue's Clues*. The researchers compared experienced *Blue's Clues* viewers with children unfamiliar with the program. They showed an episode to the children and found that experienced watchers did not attend as closely to the show, but they were more overt in their interaction with the program. This research team also performed a second study using a different television program. While the comprehension of the program was not different between the two groups of children, the researchers found that the *Blue's Clues* veterans interacted more with this different show than the non-*Blue's Clues* fans. This finding led the authors to suggest that certain programs can train children how to view them and that training can be transferred to other shows.

Ryan (2007) examined the portrayal of power in *Dora the Explorer* through textual analysis of two episodes of this animated program that centers on the adventures of a 7-year-old Latina. Ryan sought "to analyze age-, race-, and gender-related power

relationships” (p. 7). The two episodes examined were: “Dora Saves the Prince” (30 minutes) and “Dora’s Fairytale Adventure” (one hour). Ryan commented on Dora’s direct gaze at the viewers when she introduces herself and when she asks for help. Dora involves the audience in her plans using the pronoun “we” as she describes the tasks they must complete. She also asks them to repeat certain words and phrases after her. The researcher also pointed out the significance of Dora’s outfit: mostly gender-neutral except for her pink shirt, which shows her tummy, and a bracelet with a flower on it. She wears shorts rather than a skirt. She is shown as active and is in a non-traditional position of saving a prince in the first episode. According to Ryan (2007), this episode shows that “a) it’s not always females who need to be saved, b) that females can do the saving, and c) that it’s acceptable for females to be saviors, even when they belong to a minority group” (p. 16-17). In the second episode, Dora becomes a princess in order to save the day. Ryan (2007) stated:

While I do believe that by constructing the story in such a way as to make becoming a princess the only way to save Boots, Nickelodeon undermines Dora’s character a bit in the “girl power” arena, I don’t believe she completely loses her credibility as a strong female role model. (p. 18)

Ryan explained that like the first episode, Dora, the female minority character, still saves the male character – in this case, her companion Boots. Overall, Ryan sang the praises of *Dora the Explorer*’s messages of power: “Dora’s directness gives power to the preschool audience and her role as ‘savior’ gives power to young girls, but *Dora the Explorer* also gives power to a more specific audience: girls of Latin or Hispanic heritage” (p. 18). Ryan also discussed the use of Spanish instruction on the program and the presence of mariachi-style music. With regard to hegemony, Ryan (2007) concluded that “*Dora* is upsetting the consensus that traditionally favors the White male patriarchy” (p. 21).

Popp (2006) also chose *Dora the Explorer* for his study of linguistics used in media. Popp suggested that the use of Spanish in *Dora* “lends the series a sense of educational merit and cosmopolitanism” (p. 6). Rather than looking at the language used in the series, Popp’s study examined the language used in public discourse about the program. Besides *Dora*, Popp also studied the discussion of language use in *The Passion of the Christ*. He searched for magazine and newspaper articles using Lexis-Nexis and narrowed the list to 90 that spoke of the use of language in these programs. Popp (2006) concluded that:

When language is given attention, the discourse that ensues speaks volumes about how and why language is valued in a society. Regarding *Dora*, it points to the nexus of language mastery and social mobility . . . Bilingualism can open doors and act as a symbol of one’s tolerance and refinement. (p. 17)

Popp also pointed to the way media companies seem to be using language to promote their products’ distinction in the marketplace.

Research on children’s educational programming has covered program structure and diversity. Other research topics have included media effects on literacy and on emotional well-being. Additional studies have examined interactive elements in programs and how children are trained to view certain programs. Others have analyzed television programs as texts or have examined public discourse about those programs. These research efforts have shown positive impacts of educational television on children, which I believe is likely the case for *Maya & Miguel*, as well.

Family Programming

Programs aimed at the entire family often include central characters as part of a fictional family. Larson (1993) compared the presentation of two fictional families: the Huxtables (*The Cosby Show*, NBC) and the Simpsons (*The Simpsons*, Fox). Findings

from the content analysis showed that *The Cosby Show* portrayed more discussion between parents and children than between spouses, in comparison with *The Simpsons*. *The Simpsons* was less child-centered than *The Cosby Show*. Another interesting finding showed that the Simpson parents were more supportive in their discussions with one another than the Huxtables were.

In a book by Douglas (2003) that summarized his research agenda in family television programs, the author discussed research he performed in 1995, 1996, and 1997. Douglas studied 17 popular fictional television families, such as the Conners of *Roseanne*, Winslows of *Family Matters*, and the Andersons of *Father Knows Best*. Sample episodes were shown to participants, who were asked to evaluate the portrayals of those families including power, satisfaction, and relationships. Participants rated the more modern siblings (Conners of *Roseanne*, Winslows of *Family Matters*, Seavers of *Growing Pains*, and Taylors of *Home Improvement*) as “less trusting, more hostile, less able to manage and resolve conflict, and less able to socialize each other appropriately than were siblings in families” including the Andersons of *Father Knows Best*, Douglasses of *My Three Sons*, Cunninghams of *Happy Days*, Huxtables of *The Cosby Show*, and Keatons of *Family Ties* (p. 131). According to Douglas, “attributional analyses suggest that, in television families, sibling relations have deteriorated and have become considerably distressed” (p. 131). These studies offer an overview of the relationships between and across many fictional television families.

Summary of Television Literature

The research mentioned here touches on viewers’ consumption of television programs in the United States, how viewers identify with characters, the production of

televised programs, and the representation of different groups on television and how those portrayals may impact viewers. The current study also looks at these areas from the *circuit of culture* with regard to *Maya & Miguel*. I examine how the children in this study consume television, specifically *Maya & Miguel*, and how they identify with television characters on *Maya & Miguel*. I also investigate the production of this animated program by Scholastic Media, and analyze the representation of different groups (categorized by race/ethnicity, age, language, disability) on this program.

Some of the research discussed above examines the media effects of particular children's shows, including *Between the Lions* and *Dragon Tales*. The former is focused on developing reading skills for preschoolers, while the latter is centered on emotional development of that same age group. Other examinations focused on the use of television in the home and the preferences in programming. The final studies listed looked at fictional families, including aspects of family relationships and the portrayal of race and the elderly on television.

These latter studies connect with the current study because of the educational purposes behind *Maya & Miguel*. This program has been funded by the Department of Education with hopes of positive media effects on children. The literature above also relates to the current study because of the portrayal of a fictional family with a variety of races/ethnicities and ages on *Maya & Miguel*.

This review of the literature also presented examples of the methods chosen for the current examination of *Maya & Miguel*. Mandel (2006) investigated the history of one particular children's program, *Sesame Street*. Dornfeld (1998) used qualitative methods with his case study of another PBS program, *Childhood*, for which he conducted

observations and interviews to investigate its production. Ryan (2007) also performed textual analysis on an animated children's program, *Dora the Explorer*. The present study is built upon the methods found in these qualitative studies.

Chapter III

Theoretical Framework

Cultural studies focuses on culture, but that has a contested definition. I view culture in a broad sense, like Parekh (1997), who stated that culture “refers to a way of life, that is, to a way of understanding, structuring, conducting, and talking about human life, and encompassing all that is necessary for that purpose” (p. 165). Parekh went on to list specific components common to a culture: (1) beliefs, (2) values that regulate society, (3) traditions, (4) an understanding of the group’s origins and what makes it stand apart from other groups, and (5) a cultivated “common social character” (p. 166).

Part of the connection between culture and the current study surrounds *Maya & Miguel*’s placement within the PBS line-up. As Dornfeld (1998) explains, there is a close connection between public broadcasting and the presentation of cultural information:

Through a variety of formats and program genres, public television in the United States presents viewers with depictions of and assertions about the daily lives, institutions, cultural values, and histories of people like themselves or others, both nearby and in far-off places. Through these media texts, viewers grapple with and reproduce understandings of cultural identity and cultural difference. (p. 5)

The major group’s culture that is presented on *Maya & Miguel* is that of Hispanics. There are differences that are presented of subcultures within that broad group, including Mexican and Puerto Rican culture. This cultural information includes the food they eat, the clothes they wear, the words they use, and the holidays they celebrate. Cultural information about other groups, such as Chinese and African Americans, is also expressed through the storylines of this animated program. As I analyzed the episodes in the textual analysis, I expected to see representations on *Maya & Miguel* that would likely express the groups’ – or at least a *portrayal* of the groups’ – beliefs, values, traditions, origins, and “common social character” (Parekh, 1997, p. 166).

One of the most well-known definers of “culture” is Raymond Williams. He separated culture into three categories: ideal, documentary, and social. The ideal involves “a state or process of human perfection” (Williams, 1961/2003, p. 28). The documentary category, according to Williams (1961/2003), looks at culture as the “body of intellectual and imaginative work” (p. 28). Finally, his “social” definition of culture describes it as a “particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour” (Williams, 1961/2003, p. 28). This definition connects with the current study in that I examine the participant families’ “particular ways of life” – how they consume this program and others on television (Williams, 1961/2003, p. 28). This definition is said by Bennett, Grossberg, and Morris (2005) to be connected to Edward Tylor’s 1874 definition that culture “is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (p. 67). Another definition of culture comes from Geertz. Dirks (1996) explains that:

Geertz’s definition of culture has always been a semiotic one, predicated on the notion that culture has to do with meaning, with the way experience is construed rather than with some unmediated notion of experience itself, and with the centrality of symbols for conducting and expressing meanings that are systematic as well as shared. (p. 17)

Examining representations of culture on television is worthwhile because, as du Gay et al. (1997) stated, “culture is now regarded as being as constitutive of the social world as economic or political processes” (p. 2). Mediated messages, such as those on television, impact our culture as a whole. What we watch can impact our beliefs, values, traditions, origins, and cultivated character. Because of this, culture has become a common and accepted area of study. According to du Gay et al., “in recent years

‘culture’ has been promoted to an altogether more important role as theorists have begun to argue that because all social practices are meaningful practices, they are all fundamentally cultural” (1997, p. 2).

Cultural Studies

Because the current investigation involves the consumption, identity, representation, and production of culture, this research is informed by cultural studies.

Storey (1996) offered his view of the foundation of cultural studies:

All the basic assumptions of cultural studies are Marxist. This is not to say that all practitioners of cultural studies are Marxists, but that cultural studies is itself grounded in Marxism. Marxism informs cultural studies in two fundamental ways. First, to understand the meanings of culture we must analyse [*sic*] it in relation to the social structure and its historical contingency. . . . Second, cultural studies assumes that capitalist industrial societies are societies divided unequally along ethnic, gender, generational and class lines. It contends that culture is one of the principal sites where this division is established and contested: culture is a terrain on which takes place a continual struggle over meaning, in which subordinate groups attempt to resist the imposition of meanings which bear the interests of dominant groups. (p. 3)

Hall (1980a) offered a different historical perspective. He argued cultural studies has no set beginning point, but he placed the emergence of cultural studies in the 1950s. After World War II, according to Hall (1996), cultural studies “investigated the impact of modern mass consumption and modern mass society; the Americanization of [British] culture; [and] the postwar expansion of the new means of mass communication” (p. 336).

Hall (1997) described a cultural transformation taking place in the 1960s led by Lévi-Strauss and Barthes in France and Williams and Hoggart in the UK; “the cultural turn began to have a major impact on intellectual life, and a new interdisciplinary field of study organized around culture as the privileged concept – ‘cultural studies’ – began to take shape” (p. 224). Hall (1980a) suggested that the “originating texts” of cultural

studies include *The Uses of Literacy* (1961) by Richard Hoggart and *Culture and Society* (1958) and *The Long Revolution* (1961) by Raymond Williams, which “addressed the long-term shifts taking place in British society and culture within the framework of a long, retrospective, historical glance” (p. 16). Hall (1997), of course, also attributed some of the growth of cultural studies to the establishment in 1964 of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham (England), which he helped found.

Based on Hall’s description (1980b), the Birmingham Centre broke from the mainstream research efforts of the day examining media – away from the American quantification and concern with mass society. Hall and his colleagues shied away from direct-effect, stimulus-response examinations of the media. Instead, according to Hall (1980b), a cultural studies

approach defined the media as a major cultural and ideological force standing in a dominant position with respect to the way in which social relations and political problems were defined and the production and transformation of popular ideologies in the audiences addressed. (p. 117)

Rather than following the magic bullet theory, two-step flow, or other direct-effect conceptions of the media, according to Hall (1980b), “we began to replace these too-simple notions with a more active conception of the ‘audience’, of ‘reading’ and of the relation between how media messages were encoded, the ‘moment’ of the encoded text and the variation of audience ‘decodings.’” (p. 118). Using race as an example, Hall (1996) explained:

I note a shift, for example, in the way in which we understand how the media construct and represent race. The earlier approach led us to ask questions about the accuracy of media representations. We wanted to know if the media were simply distorting, like a distorting mirror held up to a reality that existed outside of itself. But what cultural studies has helped me to understand is that the media play a part in the formation, in the constitution, of the things that they reflect. . . . The reality of race in any society is, to coin a phrase, ‘media-mediated.’ (p. 340)

Much research in cultural studies involves race and ethnicity. This research often discusses stereotypes, power, and the treatment of those different from the majority as “others.”

Stereotypes are not necessarily negative. Stereotypes are a form of schema that help us process and identify people. According to Reisberg (2006), “one effect of memory schemata is to ‘regularize’ our past experiences, bringing our recollections into line with our schema-based expectations” (p. 420). Fiske and Taylor (1991) explained that “categories and schemas are ways of talking about expectations and their effects. Like it or not, we all make assumptions about other people, ourselves, and the situations we encounter” (p. 97). They stated that while some of these expectations are inaccurate, others are “functional, and indeed, we would be unable to operate without them. Such expectations, assumptions, and generic prior knowledge allow us some sense of prediction and control, which is essential to our well-being” (Fiske & Taylor, 1991, p. 97). While categorizing people can make us more comfortable and able to cope with our environment, stereotypes of people are often connected with negative treatments – ostracizing those who are different and treating them as “others.”

“Others” are those outside of the dominant group. Jordanova (as cited by Evans, 1999b) explained it well:

The idea of otherness is complicated, but certain themes are common: the treatment of the other as more like an object, something to be managed and possessed, and as dangerous, wild, threatening. At the same time, the other becomes an entity whose very separateness inspires curiosity, invites inquiring knowledge. (p. 274)

Johnson, Chambers, Raghuram, and Tincknell (2004) also addressed the topic of the “other.” According to these authors, “until quite recently, the way in which research practice focused on the other involved creating ‘it’ as an ‘object’ for research, separated from the researching subject, whose character and positioning might not figure at all” (p. 46). Johnson et al. (2004) explained that “self-other relations in research take many forms. . . . the researching self can express desires for the other . . . or it can take a critical distance from its others – making an ‘us’ against a ‘them’” (p. 47).

Edward W. Said (1978) also addressed the “us/them” relationship in his famed work, *Orientalism*. According to Said, “Orientalism is never far from what Denys Hay has called the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying ‘us’ Europeans as against all ‘those’ non-Europeans” (p. 7). This description clearly points to the ties between the concept of “us/them” and race/ethnicity. Those in the dominant group – those in power – are the ones who determine the classifications. Traditionally, the group in power has been from White culture. While someone may sense he is considered an “other,” he does not put himself in that group. He is placed there by those in power over him.

The “us/them” relationships in *Maya & Miguel* will mainly be examined in light of the representation of characters in the text itself through the textual analysis; however, the topic of us/them and power may come up periodically within the interviews, as well.

Views of the Audience

Morley examined the audience via cultural studies and discussed the decoding of media messages. Morley's famed study of the BBC's program *Nationwide* "set out to explore . . . how decodings are influenced and structured by social position, in an overdetermined manner, across a range of dimensions—of class, 'race,' ethnicity and gender—not class alone [as some summaries have implied]" (Morley, 2006, p. 108).

In addition, Amanda Hall (2005) looked at the audience through a cultural studies lens. Hall (2005) performed observations, interviews, and textual analysis of one particular television program, *The Bachelor*. She focused "on the audience and its degrees of openness to media messages" and used "an interpretive approach examining media texts in a social setting" (Hall, 2005, p. 9). This is pertinent to the current study because of the similarity of the context of the study: observing audience members as they view a particular program in a home setting.

Hall (2005) further discussed a "continuum" of audience research perceptions ranging from the Frankfurt School's (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1972) concept of a completely passive audience that accepts all of the media messages it receives to Fiske (1986) who views the audience as holding all of the power against the text (p. 27).

Condit (1989) falls between the two – the Frankfurt School's view of the stupid, lazy audience and the Fiske view of the all-powerful audience. She suggests a move from the "totalized theories of polysemy [multiple meanings that can be decoded from the text] and audience power" to "interactive theories that assess audience reactions as part of the full communication process occurring in particular rhetorical configurations" (Condit, 1989, p. 104).

I also fit somewhere in between in that I believe certain messages are more powerful than others (e.g., celebrity endorsed, heavily repeated, professionally produced, accurately targeted), and some audience members are more accepting of media messages than others in varying circumstances (e.g., a message that relates to me personally may move me more than it moves the next viewer; my education or experience may make me cynical toward certain messages; media literacy training may help children to better recognize when a company is communicating to them with a selling intent). In the case of this study, my child participants from the audience side range from 5- to 12-years-old. Within that group, I would expect the older children to be more media savvy, and therefore, less accepting of television messages as factual. All of these children have the power to turn on or turn off the program. They have chosen to watch *Maya & Miguel* for various reasons, which I will examine in the analysis chapter. Because they are different people with different backgrounds, training, and environments, I would expect their decoding of the show's messages to be somewhat varied. While they have some control over the decoding of the message, they do not have control over its encoding. This is performed by the production staff and will be analyzed later in the paper, as well.

The Circuit of Culture

Moving away from a linear, sequential conception of communication (e.g., source → channel → receiver), the *circuit of culture* is a model that offers a more holistic view of the process of communication. While the *circuit of culture* was not presented in the form used in this proposed study until 1997, Stuart Hall began to describe something similar involving “articulation” and “moments” in the 1970s. According to Hall (1980c):

it is also possible (and useful) to think of this process [of mass communications] in terms of a structure produced and sustained through the articulation of linked but distinctive moments – production, circulation, distribution/consumption, reproduction. . . . a ‘complex structure in dominance’, sustained through the articulation of connected practices, each of which, however, retains its distinctiveness and has its own specific modality, its own forms and conditions of existence. (p. 128)

Hall (1980c) further explained his concept of encoding, or the production of a message, and decoding, or the reception/consumption of a message. Programs are broadcast with encoded messages, but:

before this message can have an “effect” (however defined), satisfy a “need” or be put to a “use”, it must first be appropriated as a meaningful discourse and be meaningfully decoded. It is this set of decoded meanings which “have an effect”, influence, entertain, instruct or persuade, with very complex perceptual, cognitive, emotional, ideological or behavioural consequences. (p. 130)

Hall’s model was one of the first that demonstrated how an audience can oppose a message, in contrast to the linear models (e.g., magic bullet) that assumed each viewer/listener would simply accept what was seen/heard in the media. While audience members may still absorb the dominant message, Hall recognized that there were different levels of message reception. He proposed three positions of decoding: (1) preferred reading, or dominant-hegemonic position; (2) negotiated reading; and (3) oppositional reading.

According to Morley (2006), a question lingers as to whether the “preferred reading” is “a property of the text, of the analyst’s imagination, or a form of prediction of audience behavior which is empirically falsifiable” (p. 109). Morley continued by sharing Hall’s proclamation that this preferred position “is undoubtedly a property of the text. . . . If Hall is right, then textual analysis still has a much more important place in audience work than many subsequent scholars have recognized” (p. 109). While Morley admitted

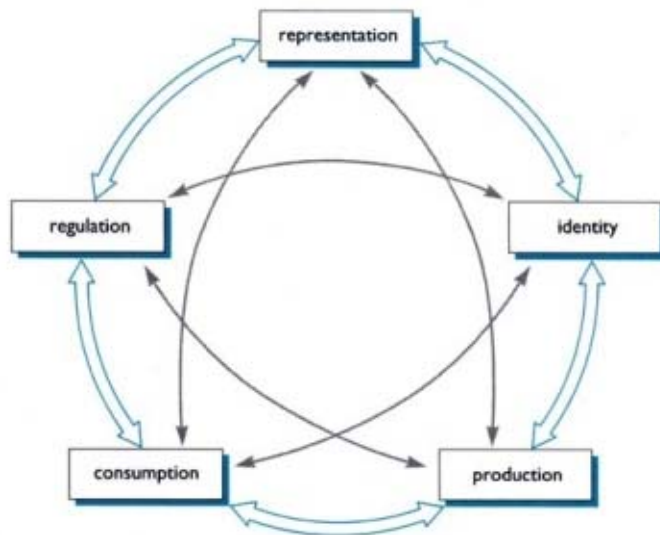
that “there are serious problems still to be resolved in developing the original insights generated by the encoding/decoding model. . . the model, despite its limitations, still has much to offer” (p. 111).

Johnson (1986/1987) broadened Hall’s original model, which focused on encoding and decoding, to include texts and readings, or consumption, of those texts. Johnson’s diagram was “intended to represent a circuit of the production, circulation and consumption of cultural products” (Johnson, 1986/1987, p. 46). Like Hall (1980c), Johnson (1986/1987) used the term “moment” to describe each box on his diagram, and he said each “depends upon the others and is indispensable to the whole” (p. 46). While Hall’s model remained somewhat linear in appearance, Johnson’s idea of a circular flow strongly influenced the eventual creation of the *circuit of culture* (see Figure 1, p. 54).

Ten years later, du Gay et al. (1997) presented the current model in a study of the cultural icon – the Sony Walkman. According to Acosta-Alzuru and Kreshel (2002), the du Gay et al. model “shares the primary principles of Johnson’s model: its depiction of the cultural process as a complex and interdependent set of moments that are distinct, but not discrete” (p. 142). In this new model, du Gay et al. suggested five processes, or moments, that make a “*circuit of culture* – through which any analysis of a cultural text or artifact must pass if it is to be adequately studied” (du Gay et al., 1997, p. 3, emphasis added). These moments are: representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation.

Figure 1

Circuit of Culture



Note. From *Production of Culture/Cultures of Production*, by Paul du Gay (Ed.), 1997, London: SAGE. Copyright 1997 by The Open University.

Reprinted with permission.

This circuit has been used to organize other works from a variety of communications fields, including public relations (Curtin & Gaither, 2005; 2006), broadcast television (Hall, 2005), and new media (Taylor et al., 2002). The *circuit of culture* fits well with the current study of *Maya & Miguel* because of the examination of the representation of various people groups in the program; the identity or connections viewers make with the characters; the production of the program by Scholastic Media; and the consumption of the show by children and their parents. For the most part, the moment of regulation, or the attempt to take meanings from the show and use them to help “make sense” of the viewer’s own world (Hall, 2005), will be out of the reach of the current study because of long-term research required. However, it will be discussed briefly with regard to the purposes behind the series.

According to Acosta-Alzuru and Roushanzamir (2003), representation “is an active process through which meanings are created” (p. 47). They explained that research examining representation “focuses on how language, images, and signs stand for—represent—things (objects, activities)” (p. 47). Representation is important because it “does not reflect or frame the world, it constitutes the world” (Acosta-Alzuru & Roushanzamir, 2003, p. 47). These authors further specify one type of representation as stereotyping, in which depictions of people are focused on particular characteristics.

Dornfeld (1998), who studied the production of a PBS documentary series called *Childhood*, said, “I look at public television representations as a form of popular anthropology within American public culture, a disciplined kind of ‘imagining’ through which producers and viewers construct understandings of themselves and others” (p. 5). According to Dornfeld, these representations on PBS may be taken more seriously than others because “public television in the United States is infused with a kind of authority, legitimacy, and importance not given to other channels and formats of broadcast media in what has been termed . . . the public sphere” (p. 5). This is important to consider because of *Maya & Miguel*’s presence on public television and partial funding by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

The moment of representation is tied to the moment of identity in that viewers may identify with characters more or less based on the presentation of those characters on screen. Coming from another direction, the producers’ own identities may impact the representations. Like representation, identity is also connected to meaning-making and culture. According to Tomlinson (1997), cultural identity is “the very way in which we understand our day-to-day lives” (p. 139). Researchers such as Acosta-Alzuru and

Roushanzamir (2003) have pointed to identity as a dynamic entity that can be impacted by texts – “it continues to be socially and symbolically constituted and struggled over. When points of difference or sharing are represented textually, that text is one point of power potentially influencing identity” (p. 49). As mentioned earlier, some see the text as having complete power over the audience, while others argue that the audience is not at all passive. According to Amanda Hall (2005), “Consumers use media texts to make sense of themselves and where they fit into the world—hence, they are active in the meaning-making process” (p. 24). Stuart Hall (1997) points out that “our identities, in short, are culturally formed” (p. 219).

According to Acosta-Alzuru and Roushanzamir (2003), “identities are particularly influenced by the idea of nationality” (p. 48). Acosta-Alzuru and Roushanzamir describe the United States as a place where “ethnicity is particularly important, and a factor that pervades everyday life” (2003, p. 48). They also suggest that different ethnicities receive different treatment; “There is an unspoken but ever-present hierarchy in the United States that privileges immigrants from Europe over immigrants from Latin America, Africa, and Asia” (Acosta-Alzuru & Roushanzamir, 2003, p. 49). This points back to the “us/them” and “other” discussions above.

Production is essential to the model because of producers’ decisions on how to represent characters. Production and representation are often also influenced by producers’ own identities. According to Dornfeld (1998), producers “engage in a complex, multifaceted process of interpretation, evaluation, and anticipation” (p. 14). Dornfeld suggests that producers should be seen as “types of agents, producing media texts within contexts constrained by both culture, ideology, and economy, but operating

within particular social locations and frameworks, not floating above society, as many approaches to the study of media forms seem to imply” (p. 13). This, again, suggests some interplay between the moments on the *circuit of culture*, as opposed to earlier linear models. Dornfeld also presents the idea of “*television producers as viewers*” and how that view:

allows us to see producers, not only in their specialized institutions, but as agents grounded in the same types of interpretive worlds in which their audiences are, and to see how, as a group of interpreting individuals, they negotiate the production of a text. (p. 16, emphasis in original)

To thoroughly examine a television show as a piece of culture, I believe it is important to look from both the angle of the producers of that program and the audience. Dornfeld (1998) warned that “the focus on reception as the site where meanings are created can obscure the analysis of the production of media forms, segregating theory and research on mediated communication into studies of production and studies of consumption” (p. 14). Dornfeld (1998) argued for a joining of the studies of production and consumption, which is also suggested via the *circuit of culture*:

The consolidation of audience and production studies offers benefits: we can apply research models grounded in socially based theories of communication to the study of both production and reception, recognize a convergence instead of a divide in these social actions, and attempt to further a holistic theoretical framework encompassing these moments. (p. 16)

While Dornfeld (1998) examined the production of a PBS documentary, Levine (2001) used an earlier iteration of the Hall (1980c) and Johnson (1986/1987) models of “cultural circulation” to examine the production of *General Hospital* (p. 66). Levine found that the “meaning of the scene was constructed through writing and performance, but also through production details” (p. 77).

This, too, supports my intention of using the *circuit of culture*, which will lead me to examine the production of the program, as well as the audience's reception of those produced messages. Levine (2001) also pointed to the manner in which the audience impacted the actual production of the program:

Lurking throughout all aspects of production is the audience, the industry's conception of the audience, the processes of audience decoding that both precede and follow any given *General Hospital* production day, and the actual audience around whom so much scholarship has centered. (p. 78)

This brings us to the final moment of the *circuit of culture* to be examined in this study: consumption.

According to Curtin and Gaither (2005), "the process of production is never fully realized until the moment of consumption. . . . Consumption, then, is as equally important as production in creating and negotiating meaning" (p. 101). Consumption has been viewed in two lights: as something forced by the producers of cultural items and as something actively performed by the audience (Evans, 1999a). Evans (1999a) explained that in the former view, which is held by the Frankfurt School, "consumption is seen negatively, as following the predetermined paths set out for it by production" (p. 19). Johnson, Chambers, Raghuram, and Tincknell (2004) expounded on the views of the Frankfurt School – this group of scholars "reviled" film and television texts "as a form of 'mass deception'" (p. 157). Adorno and Horkheimer, two of the most famous members of this school, saw an "industrialization of culture" that created "a form of mass culture that is inferior, predictable and mass produced" (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 138). These authors would apparently suggest that the people who view this low culture (film and television) must also be low in intelligence.

According to Evans (1999a), “in more recent analyses [consumption is viewed as] being a productive moment in its own right, in which consumers or viewers also contribute their own meanings through the ways in which they put artefacts and images to use” (p. 19). As opposed to the negative view of the Frankfurt School, this view of active consumption is what I will focus on for this study.

One example of mass communications research examining the moment of consumption is Curtin and Gaither’s (2005) study of how the *circuit of culture* can help explain and guide the public relations industry:

What the circuit suggests is that issues management would be more profitably understood in terms of the moment of circulation; that is, monitoring how publics appropriate messages and use them. In turn, the moment of circulation and monitoring of that moment are central to how publics are identified by others and identify themselves. (Curtin & Gaither, 2005, p. 101)

The authors proposed that “Consumption . . . is as equally important as production in creating and negotiating meaning” (Curtin & Gaither, 2005, p. 101).

Regulation is another integral piece to the *circuit of culture* model. According to Curtin and Gaither (2006), “Regulation constitutes controls on cultural activity, from formal or legal controls and technological infrastructures to the informal or local controls of cultural norms and expectations” (p. 69). Hall (1997) explains that “how ‘culture’ is shaped, governed and regulated is [important] because, in its turn, it is culture which governs *us* – which ‘regulates’ our conduct, social action, human practices and thus the way people act within institutions and in society at large” (p. 232, emphasis in original). If culture does have powerful sway over people, Hall says this points to its importance:

If culture, in fact, regulates our social practices at every turn, then those who need or wish to influence what is done in the world or how things are done will need – to put it crudely – to somehow get hold of ‘culture’, to shape and regulate it in some way or to some degree. (1997, p. 232)

The moment of regulation will be touched upon during the present research, but it will not be studied as fully because of the long-term requirements of such a study.

These moments found in the *circuit of culture* all play a role in how we send and receive messages. This circuit helps express the complexity of communication – that the process is much more than a message from point A to point B (Hall, 2005). The model is not linear, but rather interconnected – each moment is tied to all of the others. The model assisted in the organization of this study because of the four distinct moments I examined (consumption, identity, production, and representation). These moments guided my research questions, and they were used as broad themes when coding.

Chapter IV

Method

The current qualitative study of *Maya & Miguel* will be guided by several questions that are closely connected with four of the moments from the *circuit of culture* (consumption, identity, representation, and production).

Research Questions

The following questions will guide this study:

RQ1: How do the families participating in this study consume *Maya & Miguel*?

This question is intended to address the moment of consumption from the *circuit of culture*. It will be examined by observing children who regularly view the program, as well as interviewing them and their parents. I believe consumption patterns may be demonstrated in the self-reported amount of viewing, the presence or absence of other family members in the room as the show airs during the observation, and the actual observed viewing behavior – for example, does the child sit quietly, laugh, talk, or interact with the characters on the screen by repeating lines?

RQ2: How do the child participants in this study identify with *Maya & Miguel*?

This particular question relates to the moment of identity on the *circuit of culture*. The children's level of identity with the program could range from none at all to complete identification, which might be evident in a child dressing, acting, or speaking like a character. For example, my 4-year-old son has tried to talk like Paco the parrot and has asked me to fix his hair like Miguel's. This topic will be examined through interviews with the children and their parents. Observations may play a role in answering this question, as well.

My interviews and observations, then, search for any connections these children see between the day-to-day lives of the characters and their own lives. I also examined what my participants' understanding was of *Maya & Miguel*. Some of this was found simply through asking what children and their parents recalled from episodes of *Maya & Miguel*. Through these questions, I hoped to learn how they relate to the show and to its characters.

RQ3: How do personnel behind the show decide how to produce *Maya & Miguel*?

This question relates to the production moment found on the *circuit of culture*. It was addressed through interviews of Scholastic Inc. staff members and advisors. I believe topics such as age, disability, race, gender, family, and language are important to discuss because they involve groups of people who are often ignored or belittled in the media.

RQ4: How are the characters represented on *Maya & Miguel*?

This question is intended to apply to the representation moment within the *circuit of culture*. It was addressed through the textual analysis of 12 episodes of *Maya & Miguel*.

The United States is a multicultural society – “one that includes several cultural communities with their overlapping but none the less distinct conceptions of the world, systems of meaning, values, forms of social organization, histories, customs and practices” (Parekh, 1997, p. 167). This children's show seems to reflect that multiculturalism by its inclusion of so many different groups, but this question seeks to examine the manner in which these groups are portrayed.

The Current Study

This research furthers media analyses related to cultural studies by examining the television show *Maya & Miguel*. I used a variety of qualitative methods to achieve triangulation. According to Greig and Taylor (1999), the goal of triangulation is attempted “by researchers using an inductive model – that is, one which is driven by exploratory, subjective questions and the participants’ perspectives. . . . Triangulation enables researchers to capture, to some extent, the shifting realities of their participants” (p. 75). According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), “qualitative researchers seek to preserve and analyze the situated form, content, and experience of social action, rather than subject it to mathematical or other formal transformations. Actual talk, gesture, and so on are the raw materials of analysis” (p. 18).

I conducted a case study of a purposive sample of viewers and creators of *Maya & Miguel*. Based on Stake (2005), “a case study is both a process of inquiry about a case and the product of that inquiry” (p. 444). According to Yin (2003), “case studies are the preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (p. 1). Yin (2003) explained that “the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (p. 2). Merriam (1998) viewed a “case as a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries” (p. 27). She described being able to “fence in” her study topic (p. 27). According to Merriam (1998), this bounded case may “be selected because it is intrinsically interesting; a researcher could study it to achieve as full an understanding of the phenomenon as possible” (p. 28). Stake (2005) further explained

that “the case is singular, but it has subsections (e.g., production, marketing, sales departments), groups (e.g., patients, nurses, administrators), occasions (e.g., work days, holidays, days near holidays), dimensions, and domains” (p. 449). In the current case study of *Maya & Miguel*, I have followed the suggestions of Merriam (1998) and Stake (2005) by focusing on particular subsections or boundaries: five families who regularly view the program, five production-related personnel, and 12 episodes.

Stake (2005) divided case studies into two categories: intrinsic and instrumental. With intrinsic studies, the researcher “wants better understanding of this particular case,” where the researcher in an instrumental case study seeks “to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization” (Stake, 2005, p. 445). According to Stake, “the more intrinsic the interest of the researcher in the case, the more the focus of study will be on the case’s idiosyncrasy, its particular context, issues, and story” (p. 460). Because of my focus on one particular program, *Maya & Miguel*, and my interest in this show’s texts, viewers, and producers, this case study would fall under Stake’s description of an intrinsic case study.

Yin (2003) stated that a “case study’s unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence—documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations—beyond what might be available in a conventional historical study” (p. 8). Yin also offered an interesting perspective on generalization:

case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. In this sense, the case study, like the experiment, does not represent a “sample,” and in doing a case study, your goal will be to expand and generalize theories (analytic generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization). (p. 10)

According to Merriam (1998), there is not just one way of going about a case study; “unlike experimental, survey, or historical research, case study does not claim any particular methods for data collection or data analysis” (p. 28). She explained that any method of data collection could be included in a case study, though there are certain methods which are more common than others. Merriam also shared that the choice of qualitative methods for case studies “is chosen precisely because researchers are interested in insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing” (p. 29). Merriam (1998) asserted that prior to “hypothesizing or theory testing” a “basic description of the subject being studied” must be completed first (p. 38).

My study of *Maya & Miguel* seeks to offer that description. According to Merriam (1998):

The case study offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon. Anchored in real-life situations, the case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon. It offers insights and illuminates meanings that expand its readers’ experiences. These insights can be construed as tentative hypotheses that help structure future research; hence, case study plays an important role in advancing a field’s knowledge base. (p. 41)

According to Greig and Taylor (1999), “Case study triangulation entails obtaining more than one, usually three, perspectives on a given phenomenon” (p. 76). My study includes the perspectives of children, their parents, and Scholastic staff, as well as my own. By observing the families; interviewing children, parents, and producers; and analyzing the texts, the triangulation of this study should be thorough.

Interviews, observations, and textual analysis are used to cover the *circuit of culture* moments in the current study. Through in-depth interviews and observations of families viewing the program, I examine identity and consumption. Through in-depth

interviews of Scholastic personnel, I explore the production of *Maya & Miguel*. Textual analysis permits a study of the representation of race, gender, age, family, language, and disability on the show. Finally, regulation is examined in a limited capacity here and perhaps further in a future study.

Sample

The program investigated targets children ages 6 to 11. I interviewed and observed regular viewers of *Maya & Miguel* – meaning children who watch the program at least once a week. I interviewed 8 children and 5 parents one time each with a few brief parent follow-ups when necessary for clarifying various points. One family was observed a second time to see if it would yield more helpful information. Because it did not, no other follow-up observations were scheduled.

I sought a diverse group of viewers, in gender, age, and race. In the end, there were four boys and four girls ranging in age from 5 to 12 years old. Four of them were Caucasian, two were Asian American, one was Hispanic, and one was Sri Lankan. My selection of participants was done through convenience sampling in that they were found through personal contacts and purposive in that the children had to be regular viewers of the program. One participant was found through snowball sampling, as well.

Interviews

Children and their parents who consented (see Appendix A) to participate in this study were asked about their perceptions, attitudes, and recall of the program. Some topics include why the children watched this program, what they thought about the various characters, and how those characters compared with their own families. These interviews were performed in their homes. The interviews were semi-structured in that I

had an interview schedule to help me cover the important issues (Kvale, 1996), but I varied from the list of questions when an unexpected and potentially valuable topic arose or when younger participants had difficulty focusing on the interview (see Appendices B and C for interview protocols).

I had a separate question guide for my interview with the personnel behind *Maya & Miguel* (see Appendix D). Among other possible topics, they were asked about their attitudes, the representations of the characters, and the goals and objectives of the series. Most of the interviews were arranged by e-mail and performed via telephone. Participants were found through research and contact with Scholastic Media. Informants included executives and advisors with connections to the show.

The interview research followed Kvale's (1996) suggested steps: thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying, and reporting. Thematizing involves thinking through the purpose of the study – “the *why* and *what* of the investigation” (Kvale, 1996, p. 88, emphasis in original). Thematizing is the stage for “a conceptual clarification and a theoretical analysis of the theme investigated, and the formulation of research questions” (Kvale, 1996, p. 89). This second stage “consists of overall planning and preparing the methodical procedures for obtaining the intended knowledge” (p. 98). The interviews are conducted and transcribed, and then an appropriate method of analysis is selected. According to Kvale (1996), the verifying stage investigates the reliability and validity of the interview data; “*reliability* refers to how consistent the results are, and *validity* means whether an interview study investigates what is intended to be investigated” (p. 88, emphasis in original). The consistency of the results is evident in redundancy or commonality of answers. While these terms

(reliability and validity) are not commonly used by qualitative researchers, the idea behind them of rigorous research is a common goal. The final step of reporting the data involves communicating “the findings of the study and the methods applied in a form that lives up to scientific criteria, takes the ethical aspects of the investigation into consideration, and that results in a readable product” (Kvale, 1996, p. 88).

The interviews with the families were taped and transcribed for analysis as soon as possible after each interview was conducted. According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), “there is no substitute for transcribing interviews: It familiarizes you with the data, provides leads for further data gathering, provokes insights, and stimulates analytic thinking” (p. 281). Kvale (1996) states that transcribing interviews “structures the interview conversations in a form amenable for closer analysis. Structuring the material into texts facilitates an overview and is in itself a beginning analysis” (p. 168-169). These transcriptions were typed into Microsoft Word. Besides the word-for-word record, I noted other observations about the participants and the settings. These transcriptions and field notes were read many times to search for patterns during the analysis stage.

While there is no set number of required interviews, Kvale (1996) suggested that researchers perform between 5 and 25 interviews per project. This could involve as few as five people interviewed one time each, for example. What determined the number of interviews I performed was “the law of diminishing returns,” also known as redundancy (Kvale, 1996, p. 102). Once the answers began to be similar, and I could accurately anticipate the next response, I determined the interviewing element of my research to be complete.

Member checks were performed during the interviews by repeating the participants' answers as the interviews progressed. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), member checking "is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314). Member checks allow participants to clarify, correct, or add to their answers.

Observations

Children who regularly watch *Maya & Miguel* were observed in their homes as they watched one episode in an attempt to see how they normally consume the program. These children I observed were the same ones I interviewed. According to Morley and Silverstone (1991), "we need to investigate television viewing in its 'natural' settings" (p. 149). In fact, Morley and Silverstone stated that "one of the most important advances in recent audience work has been the growing recognition of the importance of *the context of reception*, specifically, in the case of television, the domestic context" (p. 150, emphasis in original). Greig and Taylor (1999) also indicated that "ecological validity can be enhanced by doing more naturalistic research, in natural settings such as homes" (p. 74).

With regard to the observation, I noted the children's reactions and interactions during an episode of the show. The parents of these children may or may not have been in the room watching the program with them; if they were present and gave their consent, the parents were also observed. I made notations of the context of my observations, such as the arrangement of the furniture, the location of the child and his/her parents in the room, the child's viewing position, and whether the parents remained during the duration of the program or if they left the child(ren) alone. Observations are an important element

of the research to see how families act and react in relation to this children's program, and they can add to the literature of how families use media in their homes.

Lindlof and Taylor (2002) listed different roles for observing researchers to play. These roles differ based upon the level of involvement from the researcher. According to Lindlof and Taylor, the participant-as-observer level occurs when "researchers enter a field setting with an openly acknowledged investigative purpose. . . . As the name of this role implies, observing flows from the perspective of participating" (2002, p. 147). I followed the participant-as-observer role in this research effort in that I watched the program with the children during the observation, and the children were aware of my presence and my study.

I typed my observations on the scene using a laptop computer or took notes by hand if the computer seemed to cause too much distraction. I then expanded my notes once I left the field. According to Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995), "writing fieldnotes immediately after leaving the setting produces fresher, more detailed recollections that harness the ethnographer's involvement with and excitement about the day's events" (p. 40). These two forms of notes are called condensed fieldnotes and expanded fieldnotes. Condensed fieldnotes are taken with the idea in mind to "get as much down on paper in as much detail and as quickly as possible, holding off any evaluation and editing until later" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 47). The researcher then takes these condensed fieldnotes and adds details from his/her memory, fleshes out the writing, and makes corrections as needed. The authors further stated that, "Writing fieldnotes promotes learning and deepens understanding about what has been seen and heard in the field" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 63). These expanded, or more detailed, fieldnotes

should work side-by-side with the interviews to point toward patterns of consumption and identity, as described in the *circuit of culture*.

Textual Analysis

Textual analysis consists of the examination of a text – whether it be written, oral, audio-visual, or something else – by a researcher. According to Bal (1997), a text can be defined as:

A finite, structured whole composed of language signs. The finite ensemble of signs does not mean that the text itself is finite, for its meanings, effects, functions, and background are not. It only means that there is a first and a last word to be identified; a first and a last image of a film; a frame of a painting, even if those boundaries . . . are not watertight. (p. 5)

Texts can even include objects such as dolls, clothing, and catalogs, as demonstrated by Acosta-Alzuru and Roushanzamir (2003) in their examination of the American Girl phenomenon. For example, in the American Girl catalogs, these researchers noted the use of type, logos, and colors to present particular messages such as “tradition.” (p. 50). The examination of these texts is referred to as “reading,” whether the text involves words on paper or, as in this study, characters animated on a television screen. *Maya & Miguel* may be referred to as a text because it has “literary and visual constructs, employing symbolic means, shaped by rules, conventions and traditions intrinsic to the use of language in its widest sense” (Hall, 1975, p. 17).

I performed a “long preliminary soak” of my text as Hall (1975) described it – “a submission by the analyst to the mass of his material” (p. 15). The duration of my soak in this particular text has exceeded two years.

According to Hall (1975), textual analysis looks for patterns of what is present as well as what is notably absent:

Literary/linguistic and stylistic analysis also employs recurrence as one critical dimension of significance, though these recurring patterns may not be expressed in quantifiable terms. The analyst learns to ‘hear’ the same underlying appeals, the same ‘notes’, being sounded again and again in different passages and contexts. These recurring patterns are taken as pointers to latent meanings from which inferences as to the source can be drawn. . . . Position, placing, treatment, tone, stylistic intensification, striking imagery, etc., are all ways of registering emphasis. The really significant item may not be the one which continually recurs, but the one which stands out as an exception from the general pattern – but which is *also* given, in its exceptional context, the greatest weight. (p. 15, emphasis in original)

Hall (1975) explained that “literary, stylistic and linguistic analysis uses the preliminary reading to select representative examples which can be more intensively analyzed” (p. 15). I completed a close reading to identify themes, then a closer reading to connect the themes together, and finally the closest reading to connect the themes to their context; in other words, at least three readings of each of the 12 selected episodes were performed.

Johnson et al. (2004) stated that “reading is an empirical procedure – the text has its own reality, which limits and pressures our reading. What features or silences strike us first? First impressions are important. We record them – in underlinings or highlighting or marginal notes” (p. 172). The text is reflected upon: “we might start to sketch an argument in bits of writing or headings” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 172). The researcher returns to the text, in this case a television program for children, and “reads” it again, but this time with ideas in mind. Johnson et al. elucidated that, at this point in the textual analysis, “we are becoming more active or interventionist as readers, less passive or receptive” (p. 172). According to Johnson et al. (2004):

A cultural analysis of a fictional text is nearly always concerned with the relationship – the dialogue, even – between the (apparently) intrinsic elements – its formal structure, characters, themes – and the (seemingly) extrinsic aspects of context, especially those concerning the social moment of production and the articulation of power relations. (p. 187)

In the spring of 2007, Mindy Figueroa arranged for all of the episodes (50) that had aired thus far to be sent to me. Some were on VHS – one episode per tape – while others were on the DVDs they have sold through Lions Gate, which have four episodes per DVD. Some of the VHS tapes included the promotions before the program and the interviews with real children that air after the program. Out of those 50 episodes, I selected 12 to evaluate in depth, which added up to approximately 6 hours of programming. I used a dual-column note taking process. On the left column I noted events happening on screen, and on the right side, I made notes of my reaction to those events (see Appendix G).

Coding

Once the data were typed, including interviews, observations, and textual analysis, I read and re-read the notes searching for themes. According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), “this emergent learning . . . is the hallmark of qualitative inquiry: **You learn as you go**. The way you organize that learning—the descriptions you provide and the categories and themes you develop—is analysis” (p. 271, emphasis in original). As I sifted through the many pages of data collected from my observations, interviews, and textual analysis, I coded the data by organizing and categorizing the emerging themes using highlighting and sticky notes. Rossman and Rallis (2003) provided a useful metaphor for how the same data can be sorted in different, yet valid ways:

Imagine a closet full of clothes; these are your data. You can organize the clothes by color (blue slacks and sweaters together), by type (all the slacks in one pile), by season for use (heavy winter clothing), or by fabric (cottons all on the same shelf). Each organization (your analysis) is valuable and justifiable, depending on your purpose. . . . Data analysis is a similar process of sorting, categorizing, grouping, and regrouping the data into piles or chunks that are meaningful. . . . Plan to group or regroup your data several times throughout the analysis process. Each grouping allows you to see different aspects of the data, enriching your understanding and insight into what you have learned. (p. 271)

For each new theme that emerged, I used a new color to highlight it within the interview transcriptions. In the end, I had 25 different colors chosen from a box of 64 Crayolas. These themes included the five moments from the *circuit of culture* (consumption, identity, regulation, representation, and production), along with the topics mentioned with my explanation of the research questions (age, family, disability, race, gender, and language). The other 14 emerged from free coding and included: friendship, promotion, description of a character's body, description of a character's clothing/accessories, description of a character's actions, preferences, ideas for the future, humor, wisdom, leadership/control, sports, animals, education, and PBS.

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), "categorization and coding are essential to making sense of qualitative data" (p. 214). Rossman and Rallis (2003) defined a "**category** as a word or phrase describing some segment of your data that is explicit" (p. 282, emphasis in original). Lindlof and Taylor (2002) described it as "a covering term for an array of general phenomena: concepts, constructs, themes, and other types of 'bins' in which to put items that are similar" (p. 214). Rossman and Rallis (2003), on the other hand, distinguished themes from categories; "a **theme** is a phrase or sentence describing more subtle and tacit processes" (p. 282, emphasis in original). Categories, according to Rossman and Rallis (2003), "provide direction for data gathering," while "thematic

analysis typically emerges from the deep familiarity with the data that comes from categorization” (p. 282). Lindlof and Taylor (2002) further described the connections between coding and categorization:

Codes are the linkages between the data and the categories posited by the researcher. . . . Codes are not the same thing as categories. The core purpose of coding is to mark the units of text as they relate meaningfully to categories (concepts, themes, constructs). . . . In addition to their role as aids to category formation, codes carry out a more mechanical role as tools for sorting, retrieving, linking, and displaying data. . . . codes serve to mark the islands, archipelagos, and other land-masses of meaningful data from the surrounding sea of raw, uncoded data. (p. 216)

According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), “coding is the formal representation of analytic thinking. . . . Coding entails thinking through what you take as evidence of a category or theme” (p. 285).

These particular methods of analysis allowed me to see connections and patterns within and between the data. By seeing these connections and patterns, I was able to reduce my data (Kvale, 1996). According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), “all analysis entails making judgments about how to reduce the massive amounts of data collected” (p. 279). The analysis methods I selected and described also allowed multiple levels of analysis so that the data was processed deeper and deeper each time.

I used open coding, defined by Lindlof and Taylor (2002) as coding that begins before categories are selected, to analyze the data from my interviews, observations, and textual analysis. I looked for words that appeared repetitively, as well. Specifically, I used a combination of highlighting and writing data on sticky notes to arrange the themes and sub-themes. As suggested by Rossman and Rallis (2003), I coded and re-coded my data as I refined my categories. After looking at the data in a more open-coding format, I examined all of my notes with the moments of the *circuit of culture* in mind

(consumption, identity, representation, and production). These moments of the *circuit of culture* were the “‘big-chunk’ categories” described by Rossman and Rallis (2003) that “may well become the major sections of the final report—the chapters of the story you want to tell about what you have learned” (p. 286).

Through interviews, observations, and textual analysis, I attempted to analyze *Maya & Miguel* in a way that will offer the reader a more complete picture of the program – how it represents people, how producers of the series decided how to portray the characters, and how viewers make meaning from what they have seen presented on this children’s television show.

Pilot Interview & Observation

In December 2005, I interviewed someone from the *Maya & Miguel* team, Director of Development Beth Richman³.

A pilot observation was performed in March 2006. A family was observed as they watched *Maya & Miguel* (and parts of other programs) in the home setting from 4:45 to 5:45 p.m. on a weekday. The participants were a mother, 39, father, 49, and their three children, ages 6, 8, and 10 (see Appendix E for more information on the KROFT⁴ family). This was my first experience as a silent researcher observing people in their home. I learned that I need to encourage the families to act as normal as possible – that they should not do anything special for me. Based on what I learned in this pilot study, I handled some aspects differently in later observations and interviews. The key difference

³ Scholastic employees’ real names will be presented in upper and lower case with their permission.

⁴ Parent and child participants’ names have been changed to protect their identity. The names are presented in all capital letters to identify them as pseudonyms. Character names from *Maya & Miguel* are presented in upper and lowercase letters.

is that I recorded all of my interviews. I was at a disadvantage without a tape of my first interview with Beth Richman.

From these pilot studies, I learned more about how families consume *Maya & Miguel*. I also learned more about the background and mission of the program from the Scholastic point of view. Both of these pilot studies assisted me as I continued to work on the study.

These methods of interviews, observations, and textual analysis provide me with a rich view of my participants' relationship with *Maya and Miguel* and with thick descriptions of the program itself. They also offer the ability to examine my research questions based on the *circuit of culture's* moments of consumption, identity, production, and representation.

Chapter V

Context and Participant Information

The purpose of this study is to examine the angles of consumption, identity, representation, and production of one particular television program: *Maya & Miguel* (Forte, 2004) using the *circuit of culture* (du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay, and Negus, 1997). This chapter will describe the researcher and her perspective, the physical settings for the study, and the children, parents, and production staff who agreed to participate.

Notations are provided in parentheses recording the reference information for interviews, observations, or other documents. These sources are listed in Appendix O in order to provide an audit trail. An audit trail provides a clear link back to the original documents. For example, for each quotation taken from a participant, the reader will notice the participant's name and the line number of that interview or other document from which the information was taken. This use of an audit trail should increase the trustworthiness of the research. Price (1998) explains that the inclusion of "a complete audit trail of the method of collection, analysis, and use of data" can help "insure consistency and confirmability." (p. 73).

Background of the Researcher

Said (1978) cites from a translation of Gramsci's Prison Notebooks:

The starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory. . . . therefore it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory. (p. 25)

The following section provides my effort at creating an inventory of the influences on my life and, therefore, on my research.

Personal Influences

I am a female Caucasian who grew up in the Southwest. Both my parents were educators, so we would likely be considered middle class. I am an only child. My husband and I have been married for 14 years, and we have one child – a 4-year-old boy. When I began this study, I was 34.

As a child, I recall watching a lot of television – at home and at my daycare facility before and after school. My parents and I also went to the movies almost every weekend. I know I preferred watching television to playing outside. While there were no set viewing rules that I recall, my parents sometimes limited my television viewing as a punishment.

At daycare, we watched cartoons like *Popeye*, which I grew to detest. Interestingly, when given the choice of watching television or playing outside at daycare, I would have chosen the outdoors. Sometimes we watched live-action programs like the *Bugaloos*, *Banana Splits*, and *Sigmund the Sea Monster*, which I preferred to the cartoons. At the daycare, we had to sit silently in a dark room to watch these programs, so that may have added to my negative impression of some of the shows. That negativity did not rub off on the *Bugaloos*, however, which makes me wonder if my preference was more related to the type of program – live action as opposed to animation – or if it were because of the constant presence of the cartoons and rarity of the live-action shows. I also remember watching and enjoying educational programs such as *Sesame Street*, *3-2-1 Contact*, *Captain Kangaroo*, *Mr. Rogers*, *Peppermint Place* (a regional program), and *The Electric Company*, but I do not remember whether I was at home or at daycare when I viewed them. In addition, I remember the “Schoolhouse Rock” interstitials with

fondness. I also often watched *Davey and Goliath*, a stop-action children's program, on Sunday mornings at home before we went to church. I remember crying after one episode when Davey's grandmother died.

Besides educational programming, I remember watching entertainment programs at home like *Little House on the Prairie*, *Happy Days*, *Laverne & Shirley*, *CHiPs*, *The Love Boat*, *The Dukes of Hazzard*, *Magnum P.I.*, *The Six Million Dollar Man*, *Bionic Woman*, *Adam-12*, *The Incredible Hulk*, and *Hawaii Five-0*. I also recall watching *My Three Sons*, *Love American Style*, *I Dream of Jeannie*, *That Girl*, *Bewitched*, and *Leave it to Beaver*, which were apparently re-runs, though I did not realize it at the time. I also watched re-runs of *The Lone Ranger* and *The Rifleman* on Sunday afternoons at my grandparents' house and re-runs of *Gidget* and *The Patty Duke Show*, though I do not remember when and where I saw them.

Most of the characters in these programs reflect my ethnicity and economic class. I believe this is typical of the television fare available at the time. There was at least one African American character on *The Love Boat* and on *Magnum P.I.*, an Asian American on *Happy Days*, and, of course, Tonto was supposed to represent a Native American on *The Lone Ranger*. These are the only major cast members outside of my ethnic group that I recall from these programs; however, there were other ethnicities prominently featured on *Sesame Street* and *The Electric Company*.

We do not have a specific time limit we follow on our son's television viewing. Instead, we have set rules about the content (e.g., no magic, no dragons, no shooting), which actually end up limiting his screen time because there are so many shows with those elements in them. Also with regard to content, because of the literature I have read

in this area, I seek age-appropriate, educational programming for him, as opposed to entertainment-focused fare. The key provider of these educational programs on broadcast television is PBS. This is how we came to watch *Maya & Miguel*.

Identifications with Maya & Miguel

I asked each of my participants about characters or situations from *Maya & Miguel* with which they could identify, so it was suggested that I should answer the same for myself. For the most part, my life is nothing like the stories and characters portrayed in *Maya & Miguel*, but there are a few similarities. Like the main characters, my parents are still married to one another, but unlike Maya and Miguel, I have no siblings – perhaps I am more like their friends in this regard. Like them, I have grandparents with whom I have had a close relationship, but they lived 30 minutes away from us – not across the hall. I saw them at least once a week during the first 18 years of my life. Because of a positive and close relationship, I can relate to the children’s love for Abuela. My grandmother is someone I still call for advice, particularly on questions related to food, sewing, or child rearing. I enjoy hearing stories from her childhood and about our family. Most likely I did not appreciate these as much when I was a child, but I certainly recognize their value now and have taped a few of these conversations for posterity.

Like these fictional children, I attended public school and had friends in my class, but there was not much variety in race, ethnicity, or disability. I recall three Hispanic boys in my elementary grade, no African Americans, and only one boy with a non-permanent disability who temporarily wore leg braces. My kindergarten teacher was Hispanic, but the rest were Caucasian. In my home, we spoke English. Like most U.S. citizens, my parents had studied other languages in school – my dad studied Spanish

rather extensively and my mother studied German. Because of my father's knowledge of Spanish, he taught me a number of words as a child, but only English was spoken conversationally.

Other similarities between the Santoses and us include a family business and sports. Our family "business" is education – both of my parents were teachers – but that does not compare very well to a pet store beneath a family's apartment. I played soccer for a couple of years in junior high school and certainly participated in other activities with my friends during recess and in physical education class like the children on the show.

I was drawn to this program because of my fascination with the topics and my appreciation for the clean, positive stories, rather than because of a reflection of my own life.

Research Interests

As far as my interest in qualitative research, I credit some of that to my yearbook background. I served on yearbook staffs for eight years and was an advisor to a high school yearbook for six years. During that time, I interviewed and trained students to interview sources for stories. It was something I enjoyed and had become comfortable doing.

I see great value in the depth of information to be found via qualitative research. During my master's work, I doubt qualitative was mentioned beyond what was in the text. It still is not what the majority of researchers in our college perform. One of my first courses in pursuit of this degree was under one of them, though. The class was called visual communications. It made me think, again, of my yearbook work. What I

discovered was that it was much more than I expected. We studied modernism, poststructuralism, and discourse analysis, for example. At the end of the course, the professor asked us to have a sort of exit interview with him, and he asked about our plans and goals. I told him about a study I began in a previous class, and he made a comment that he thought I could do something more meaningful than that. This was a turning point.

I had begun with research ideas that interested me, but now I wanted to find projects that would benefit society somehow. Although I plan to continue some of the public relations research I found/find interesting, I see my direction shifting toward media impacts on children. This interest in children might have been there anyway because of my seven years of teaching high school, but it is especially strong now that I am a mother.

While most researchers in the area of media effects focus on violence, I am more interested in studying the prosocial opportunities available through educational television. I am a firm believer in the positive educational possibilities of media. Videos (via film, television, or computer) can show us places and things we could not otherwise see – foreign lands, the past, and even inside our bodies. Besides educational television, I appreciate clean entertainment programming. These views of television certainly influence my research of that medium.

Besides prosocial training available from certain television programs (e.g., *Sesame Street*), I am fascinated with how portrayals of race, age, occupation, gender, language, etc. can affect children's (or anyone's, for that matter) perceptions of social reality. This is why the children's program *Maya & Miguel* caught my attention so

strongly; it involved different races, ages, languages, and cultures. It is also educational in nature with the goal of helping children better understand one another and get along. What a fantastic show to look at in order to study so many topics at the same time that interest me!

In the fall of 2005, I became involved in a study of language preferences of bilingual people and how those preferences might impact the credibility they ascribed to different messages. While my Spanish is limited to what I learned from my father and from a brief course when I was 6 years old, I am still fascinated with the use of language – a fascination that led me to teach both English and French at the high school level.

As our research team brainstormed about the direction we would take with the study, I brought the group's attention to *Maya & Miguel*, a program that uses code switching between Spanish and English in a seemingly natural way. I found an e-mail address on the Scholastic Entertainment (now Scholastic Media) Web site and sent a message asking to speak to someone about the language use on the program. I soon received an e-mail reply from Beth Richman, an executive working with the program. She agreed to a telephone conference call with our research team that December. Two of us were able to participate in the telephone call and learned much about the program. This phone call spurred me to focus an entire study on *Maya & Miguel*. I was encouraged with such a positive and agreeable response from Scholastic, and from Richman in particular.

Not only do I have an interest in other languages but also other cultures. My husband is half Navajo. While he does not identify with all of the cultural aspects of the tribe because of his adoption, he does identify them as his "people." We have met his

mother and two half-sisters; we have heard about tribal ceremonies that they have shunned because of their Christianity; and we have learned a few Navajo words. This firsthand knowledge of another people group can certainly impact my views and research of other cultures.

I am intolerant when it comes to criticizing someone for a difference in skin color or some other difference given at birth. For some reason, even as a child, I would become greatly offended when someone spoke negatively about or mocked a marginalized group. At an early age, I remember hearing Mexican immigrants referred to as “wetbacks,” and that bothered me tremendously. I remember seeing people imitate the mentally retarded, and that angered me. I suppose this is one reason the positive portrayal of a diverse group of characters appealed to me.

I first approached one of the new professors in our college about my idea of studying *Maya & Miguel* in the fall of 2005. I had heard that she would be offering a qualitative research class in the spring, so I asked her if she thought it sounded like an appropriate qualitative study. She confirmed that it would be, and I enrolled in her class with my final project already in mind. That spring I conducted my pilot study observation and learned more about not only my current theoretical underpinnings but also the practical “nuts and bolts” of qualitative research methods.

I had heard from many people that the best way to work on your dissertation is to begin the study as a class project and to further it each semester. That finally came together for me; I could see the proverbial writing on the wall that THIS was my dissertation topic.

Roles & Bias

My roles as a woman, a wife, a mother, a daughter, a student, a researcher, and an educator influence my perceptions of the program and impact my research methods and analysis. My Christian beliefs also play a part in my analysis, as do my perspectives as a U.S. citizen. As a qualitative researcher, I recognize that I am the research instrument (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) – my background is *expected* to impact the framework of the study. My research is not separated from myself, nor is it value-free. It is, however, objective in the sense described by Scriven (as cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985): “‘objective’ means reliable, factual, confirmable or confirmed” (p. 300).

My data are dependable (aka reliable) because I honestly recount what I have seen and heard. My research should also be considered dependable because of triangulation of my data and a clear description of my methods, sources, and analysis, (M. Price, personal communication – in person, March 22, 2007). The findings demonstrate “confirmability” (aka reliability) through an inclusion of an audit trail (M. Price, personal communication – in person, March 22, 2007). The study demonstrates credibility (aka internal validity) because I have used triangulation, peer debriefing, and prolonged engagement with the text and have verified the information with my participants through member checks (M. Price, personal communication – in person, March 22, 2007).

This study, like other qualitative studies, is useful to other researchers *because* of – not despite – the natural biases within the researcher. It is hoped that through the thick descriptions provided, the reader may be able to transfer the findings to other populations with which he or she is familiar. This is referred to as transferability. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985):

if there is to be transferability, the burden of proof lies less with the original investigator than with the person seeking to make an application elsewhere. The original inquirer cannot know the sites to which transferability might be sought, but the appliers can and do. . . . the responsibility of the original investigator ends in providing sufficient descriptive data to make such similarity judgments possible. (p. 298)

It is my goal to provide those thick descriptions of my observations, interviews, and textual analysis that will allow readers to make connections, if applicable, between what is written here and experiences in their own lives. Perhaps some of those connections will come from recalling children's programming they watched as youngsters themselves or from viewing similar programs with their own children, grandchildren, nieces, or nephews.

The Context

The following section will offer information about the context of the study. This contextual information will include a description of the location and the participants.

The Cities

The majority of this research was performed in a Southwestern U.S. city of around 200,000 people that is generally considered quite conservative. The median age of this city's residents is 29.7 years old (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). The city hosts three universities, yet only 26% of the citizens 25 years and older have college degrees. While a majority of the population is White (72.9% in the 2000 census), there is a large population of Hispanic residents (27.5% in the 2000 census). The percent of families who speak a language other than English at home is 22.3% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

Because of the snowball sampling technique, one family was located elsewhere, in a suburb of a much larger Southwestern city. This suburb's population currently hovers around 80,000 and rests outside a metropolitan area of approximately 1.2 million

people, according to a 2003 census estimate (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). Approximately 18% of the suburb reported Hispanic heritage in the 2000 census. The percentage of families that speak a language other than English at home is slightly lower in this suburb at 19.3% than in the primary setting, and the percentage of residents with at least a bachelor's degree is higher (39.1%). (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

Participants: The Viewers & Their Homes

This section's purpose is to provide descriptive detail about the parent and child participants in the study. All participants took part in the study voluntarily. They were part of a purposive sample in that each child had to be a regular viewer of the program. I attempted to find other Hispanic viewers through a snowball sample and found only one family during the timeframe of the current study.

Each adult participant signed a consent form to acknowledge agreement to be observed and interviewed, as well as to have her children interviewed and observed. Children signed assent forms expressing their agreement to participate. There were five families who participated. This broke down into five mothers and eight children. The fathers at most of the homes came into the rooms briefly, but none of them were involved in the interviews. The names of these participants have been changed to protect their privacy and have been typed in all capital letters to indicate they are pseudonyms.

The production participants also signed a consent form or let me know via e-mail whether they wished to be cited under their own names or pseudonyms. They each agreed to be quoted with their real names. I interviewed three Scholastic staff members and one advisory board member by phone, and I obtained interview responses from one employee by e-mail only. Other information (e.g., international sales lists, program demographics,

responses to further questions) was shared by e-mail from each of the Scholastic employees.

The FLINT Family. MARCIA is in her 40s and is married. She is the mother of two girls adopted from China. She and her husband are Caucasian, though he is originally from outside the United States. She is a mass communications professor, and her husband is a soccer coach. I have known MARCIA for more than 10 years. When I interviewed MARCIA, she had recently been offered a job in another town, so their home was on the market. This likely affected how the house was arranged. We sat across from each other at a round oak table that sat between their kitchen and living room. I began the interview with MARCIA before *Maya & Miguel*, but had to stop when the show began. We finished our interview after the episode. MARCIA wore a blue t-shirt, jeans, and black Birkenstock sandals. During the interview, I often stopped the tape recorder when her daughters came in the room needing her attention. We were often interrupted as the girls went in and out of the house, got into disagreements, or wanted something to eat or drink.

MARCIA's older daughter is NIKI, who is 7 years old. During the interview she wore a light purple t-shirt with pastel flowers in an oval on the front with the word "paradise." She wore a necklace with a black strap and silver cross inside an oval – her mom later told me she got the necklace at Taco Bell.

The younger sister, CORRIE, is 5 years old. She sat across from me at the oak dinner table. She actually began talking about the show before I could turn my tape recorder on. She was excited about *Maya & Miguel* and was quite a talker. She smiled almost constantly. She remembered – or at least shared – many more details about the show than her sister did. She wore a blue sundress with blue and white whales on it. She

held a light blue blanket with her at the table and would sometimes pretend it was a snake or a giant snail. While her sister was interviewed, CORRIE drew a picture for me.

The KROFT Family. SYDNEY is 39. She is married with three children, whom she teaches at home. She once taught elementary school. SYDNEY is married to MARTY, who works as an engineer at a local television station. Each member of the family is Caucasian and a practicing Christian in the Baptist denomination. The family members were all born and raised in the current setting. SYDNEY did serve as a foreign missionary in the Dominican Republic for several years in her 20s. During the observation, Sydney had her hair pulled back, wears glasses, a navy t-shirt, and jeans.

The interviews were conducted on a separate visit to the family's home. With each family member, we sat at the kitchen/dining room table for the interview. The table resembled a picnic table with benches on each side. I sat on one bench with the participant on the opposite side from me.

HOLLY is SYDNEY's 10-year-old girl. She is the oldest child in the KROFT family. She, like the other children, wore sweatpants and a t-shirt during the observation. Her hair was braided and extended down her back about a foot. Her t-shirt was red and sweatpants were blue. MARSHALL, is the middle child in the KROFT family and was 8 years old when I interviewed him. WILL is the youngest child in the family. He was 7 when I first observed him, but he did not agree to be interviewed until he was 8. At the time he was interviewed, his brother was already 10 and his sister had turned 11. When I interviewed him, WILL wore a light blue t-shirt with a logo from *The Chronicles of Narnia* and darker blue shorts.

I once attended church with this family. We are still in contact every few weeks. Prior to my interview with WILL, the family had moved to a new house. This is the third house they have lived in since we met them in 2003.

The RATNARAJA Family. SANUTHI is 34 and is the mother of two with another soon on the way. During the observation, she wore a blue shirt with green embroidery and jeans. When I interviewed her, she planned to defend her dissertation in chemistry within approximately six months. The family was preparing to move because her husband just completed his Ph.D. in math and both had been offered positions at a university. The husband came in before the interview began and asked my major. SANUTHI asked if I would like hot tea and how I would like it fixed, then the husband left to go to a friend's house. Before he left, he said his son was excited about being interviewed.

The couple came to the United States from Sri Lanka. They are practicing Hindus. The parents ride the city bus to school/work, which is how I met SANUTHI. We saw each other every day and began to talk about our areas of research. When I found out her son watched *Maya & Miguel*, I asked if I could interview and observe him. She was kind enough to invite me to their duplex for the observation and interview.

RANJAN is the 5-year-old son of SANUTHI. He was born in Sri Lanka, though most of his life has been spent in the United States. He has one younger sibling with another on the way. On the day of the interview, he wore a red t-shirt and jean shorts. He wears glasses and has dark brown hair. That was my first time to meet him and my first visit in their home.

The WOOD family. JANET is a 50-year-old married woman. She has one biological child and one older step-child. She and her husband work at the same major university. She works as a staff member in the College of Education while he works at the physical plant as an electrician. They have attended a Presbyterian church but are not currently active members. The WOOD family lives near us. One day when I saw their daughter, CHRIS, outside, I asked if she watched the show. When she answered positively, I set up an interview with her and her mother.

CHRIS is 12 years old and in sixth grade. She is the only child of JANET and JACK, but she does have a much older step-sister from JACK's previous marriage. While the WOODS are Caucasian, the step-sister is half-Hispanic. CHRISSY has braces and freckles. During the interview, she wore a kelly green t-shirt and dark green pants with a lime green border at the hem. Her shirt said, "Green Day. Kiss me, I'm punk!" with a shamrock with safety pins in it. Her hair was recently dyed to a shade of red in honor of her twelfth birthday.

The CLIFT Family. ANNA is 35, married, and has two sons. She works for a Christian ministry, and her husband works for a travel-related company. ANNA is Hispanic and her husband is Caucasian. My father met ANNA when she was a student at the university where he works. My parents go to dinner with her family a few times a year and found out they watch *Maya & Miguel* when my mother mentioned my dissertation topic.

ELOY proudly told me he is 5 *and a half* years old. His brother is 8 months old. ELOY is a quiet boy. He has dark hair and a slim build. He is in kindergarten. His mother speaks to him in almost all Spanish, while his father speaks to him in English with the

goal of having him completely fluent in both languages. During the interview, there were a number of instances in which ELOY answered my question to his mother in Spanish. She would then encourage him to tell me his response and to speak up for the recorder.

Participants: The Maya & Miguel Team

I began my interviews with Scholastic personnel in the fall of 2005. Each of these interviews was conducted by telephone or by e-mail. Scholastic Media personnel were kind enough to respond to my requests for interviews and for materials.

*Beth Richman*⁵. I e-mailed Scholastic using the contact information on the company's Web site and a few days later I received an e-mail reply from Beth Richman, director of development for Scholastic Media and creative executive for *Maya & Miguel*. We exchanged a number of e-mails and she agreed to talk by phone that December. I had not yet taken a qualitative research class and did not realize I should have recorded the conversation. I did take notes with pen and paper as another professor and I sat in a conference room in our building and asked her questions we thought might relate to another project. That hour-long interview sparked my interest in expanding this study for my dissertation.

Mindy Figueroa. That spring, Richman left the company and, in an e-mail dated March 22, 2006, she gave me the contact information for Arminda "Mindy" Figueroa, the project director for *Maya & Miguel*. When I began my e-mail correspondence with Figueroa in April 2006, she told me "there has been quite a transition here at our end on *Maya & Miguel*, literally I am the only [person] left working full time on the project" (personal communication – e-mail, April 17, 2006, lines 3-4). That fall, she told me "we

⁵ The names of Scholastic informants have not been changed. As opposed to those of the child and parent participants, these are not pseudonyms.

have been a little crazy wrapping up the 65 episodes” (personal communication – e-mail, August 17, 2006, lines 2-3). In a later e-mail, Figueroa clarified what she would be able to discuss in an interview: “I also wanted to point out that since the production of the show has been wrapped up since last February, most of the answers would be focused on the genesis of the show, educational goals, marketing and outreach efforts” (personal communication – e-mail, August 23, 2006, lines 9-10). At that point, she said “around 40” of the episodes had aired (line 17).

Figueroa said she was “responsible for development of strategic marketing and outreach plans, including all aspects of project management, from series launch and promotion to supervision of synergistic consumer and trade marketing, outreach, cause-related marketing activity, partnerships with the Latino community and others” (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, lines 18-21). She also said she acted “as the key liaison with the Hispanic Congressional Caucus and Capitol Hill” (lines 21-22).

I later interviewed Figueroa by telephone in December 2007. Figueroa maintains her title as project director and continues to work part time for Scholastic, but she has also begun her own business, Latin2Latin, a marketing and communications company focused on the Hispanic/Latino community.

Cheryl Gotthelf. When I e-mailed my list of questions to Figueroa, at her request, she also had Cheryl Gotthelf, vice-president of marketing and media relations, respond to some of the questions. Gotthelf now works for Chorion Silver Lining.

Federico Subervi. During the spring of 2006, I met Federico Subervi and discovered that he was the cultural advisor to *Maya & Miguel*. He had been on the board of advisors during the development of the program before it aired. We saw each other

again briefly at two annual communications conferences (August 2006; August 2007) and at another conference addressing Spanish-language media in November 2007. While he agreed to be interviewed when we first met, it was not until November 2007 that we were able to have a formal, recorded interview by telephone. He currently serves as a professor at Texas State University and specializes in Latino media.

Linda Kahn. Mindy Figueroa suggested I contact Linda Kahn with my questions about the international sale of the series. Kahn is the senior vice president for international sales and merchandising at Scholastic Media. She has worked at Scholastic for approximately 13 years. She was kind enough to e-mail the list of countries/regions where *Maya & Miguel* has been purchased, and we spoke by phone in March 2008.

Kahn described her work: “I take the programs that we produce like *Maya & Miguel* and sell them all over the world to broadcasters or cable networks, get them placed on television and then look at opportunities for video licensing” (L. Kahn, personal communication – telephone, March 27, 2008, lines 41-43). Kahn said, “I’m focused on TV, video, licensing, consumer products, promotions, all those sorts of things around the world” (lines 47-48). Kahn said her goal for *Maya & Miguel* was “to sell it as broadly as possible so kids all over the world can enjoy it” (line 303).

The conversations with the Scholastic personnel and advisor were done by telephone and e-mail because of the distance between us. Kahn, Gotthelf, and Richman reside in New York. Subervi lives in Austin, and Figueroa travels between Fort Lauderdale and New York.

Summary of Context

This study is seen through the eyes of my participants – children, parents, and Scholastic staff – as well as my own lenses. These descriptions should help the reader better understand the roles and biases inherent in the comments from all of the informants involved. Because of our varied vantage points, we each have something different to offer in our descriptions of the program. Viewed together, these impressions should provide the reader with a richer understanding of this piece of culture – *Maya & Miguel*.

Chapter VI

Analysis

The purpose of this study is to shed some light on an educational children's television program that is attempting to tackle a number of major social issues, including race, ethnicity, disability, language, and age. *Maya & Miguel* seeks to teach English to Spanish speakers and to foster positive relationships between people of different cultures through the stories of Hispanic, twin 10-year-olds and their family and friends. Four research questions, heavily influenced by the *circuit of culture*, guided my study of the multi-lingual, multi-cultural PBS children's show *Maya & Miguel*: (1) How do the participants consume *Maya & Miguel*?; (2) How do they identify with *Maya & Miguel*?; (3) How did Scholastic decide how to produce the program?; and (4) How are the characters represented on *Maya & Miguel*?

These questions were investigated using in-depth interviews with children, parents, and personnel from Scholastic Media, the company which produced this educational, animated program. I also observed the children as they watched the show. Finally, I analyzed episodes of *Maya & Miguel* using textual analysis.

Each interview, observation, and textual analysis note was printed and read multiple times. Themes began to emerge as I read them. Some themes were expected, such as those that related directly to the *circuit of culture* (e.g., consumption, identity) and those that had emerged through my casual viewing prior to the study (e.g., language use, race, disability). Others emerged unexpectedly during the study (e.g., friendship, wisdom, humor). All of these themes are discussed below through my analysis of the audience interviews, production team interviews, and textual analysis.

The Audience

The audience members, in this case the children and parent participants, hold a prominent role for my first two research questions: (RQ1) how do the families consume this program? and (RQ2) how do the child participants identify with the program? These questions were investigated through observations and interviews with eight children who regularly watch the animated sit-com⁶ *Maya & Miguel*. I also examined the families' consumption of *Maya & Miguel* through interviews with the children, their mothers, and in-home observations. These interviews were conducted in person in their homes.

Introduction to the Audience

I did not choose to interview *mothers* exclusively – I simply wanted to hear a parent's viewpoint, but it was the mothers of these children who were the most accessible, and they are the ones who agreed to be interviewed when I asked to speak to a parent. In this study, I spoke with JANET WOOD and her daughter, CHRIS; SYDNEY KROFT and her children, HOLLY, MARSHALL, and WILL; MARCIA FLINT and her daughters, NIKI and CORRIE; ANNA CLIFT and her son ELOY; and SANUTHI RATNARAJA and her son, RANJAN (see Appendix G for further details on these participants).

Each of the children lives with his/her mother and father. In each family except the KROFTS, both parents are employed outside the home. While three of the mothers have graduate degrees, each family would fall into the lower to middle-income range. Each family lived in a house except the RATNARAJAS, who lived in a duplex. All of the

⁶ During my telephone interview with Linda Kahn, senior vice president for international sales and merchandising for Scholastic Media, she described *Maya & Miguel* as an “animated sit-com.” By using this term, she said the buyers know to expect comedy, animation, and particular situations that recur.

children have siblings. CHRIS has a half-sister, who is in her early 40s. NIKI and CORRIE are adopted sisters, but the others have full-blooded siblings.

With regard to race/ethnicity, NIKI and CORRIE were born in China. SANUTHI and RANJAN were born in Sri Lanka. The rest of the participants were born in the United States. The U.S.-born participants in the group would be considered White, except for ANNA and ELOY, who are of Hispanic heritage.

Ethnicity was also evident in language use. ANNA and ELOY speak Spanish and English. SANUTHI speaks Sri Lankan. I would assume her son does, too, but I am not certain. SANUTHI and RANJAN only spoke English around me.

Consumption by the Audience

I asked the mothers how important television was to their families. Two of them had a closer connection to television. MARCIA has worked in television as an anchorwoman and now teaches broadcast journalism, so she answered the question saying it is “pretty important” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 233). She also explained that “it’s my business, too” (line 234). MARCIA commented, “I think there are some real positive aspects with television. They’re harder to find for children . . . Parents can use it as a teaching tool as well and follow up with questions” (lines 234-241). In a similar situation, SYDNEY said, “We could live without it, except that it’s our means of living” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, lines 147-148). Her husband works as an engineer at the local PBS station.

When answering the same question of television’s importance, JANET said, “At times it just depends on the weather, seasons and stuff, but we can get by without it, and we do, but then there’s times when it’s on and we may pay attention to it or it’s just *on*”

(personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, lines 120-122, emphasis in original). JANET further explained, “I use it kind of as a relaxation just to wind down. . . . And CHRIS being a kid probably watches more than she should. We try to work on that” (lines 122-125). ANNA said, “I mean, we watch a lot of television,” but she added that she specifically looks for educational programs for her son to view (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, line 145).

Tuning in to Maya & Miguel. Most of the children did not remember why they began watching. Those who did said they “just wanted to know what was on” (NIKI, personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 93) or that they just found it one day (RANJAN, personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, line 14). CHRIS said, “I usually watch TV while I do my homework just to keep me company sometimes” and that she liked watching *Maya & Miguel* because it taught Spanish (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, line 16-17).

I also asked the parents about their children’s consumption of the program, the children’s general television habits, and the parents’ television habits. Two of the mothers, MARCIA and SYDNEY, mentioned that they heard about the show through promotions and from personnel at the local PBS station. According to ANNA, the reason ELOY began watching was because she searches for bilingual programming for him to watch. JANET said, “I think it was the sequence of cartoons that were on PBS” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, line 11) that led CHRIS to start watching.

Toward the middle of the interview with NIKI, she told me she watches *Maya & Miguel* because “I like it. It’s fun” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 126), but from the beginning of the interview she wore the look of a bored teenager –

though she was only 7 years old. She apparently saw the program as beneath her age group because her younger sister was such a big fan. She referred to *Clifford* as a “baby show” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 114) she sometimes got “stuck watching” (line 112). I do not know if she was trying to impress me with her aloofness or if she was simply trying to distance herself from her sister’s preferences and activities.

Keeping it on. I asked the children and their mothers what motivated them to continue watching the program after they saw it the first time. All but one child gave me a reason for continuing to watch. The two oldest girls, HOLLY and CHRIS, mentioned the Spanish on the program as a key motivating factor behind their viewing. NIKI mentioned that “it’s fun” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 126). CORRIE answered that the line-up of shows kept her watching because “it’s always on after *Arfur* [*Arthur*]” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 24).

The mothers also offered reasons why they thought their children chose to continue watching *Maya & Miguel*. SANUTHI said, “I think RANJAN may like it because of the skateboard. He likes sports” (personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, line 19-20). After viewing her first full episode, JANET said the following about CHRIS, “I think she still, even at this age, is still into cartoons, and it was a good show” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, line 20-21).

SYDNEY suggested that the show’s popularity with her children stemmed from its novelty: “They’re excited when it’s a new one. They come in [pause] stop whatever they’re doing at 5 to check and see if it’s a new one” (personal communication – in

person, April 3, 2006, lines 23-25). SYDNEY continued, “They probably like it because it’s one of the newer shows – they haven’t seen 15 million times” (lines 25-26).

MARCIA was drawn to the program for different reasons: “I was interested in a show with a little diversity. I mean . . . my girls are from China. I thought it would be nice to have a little diversity” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, lines 17-19). When asked why her daughters watch the show, MARCIA responded, “I think the timing is good. It’s part of the PBS line-up. . . . And my daughters know – well, the older one, that she can watch Channel 4 [PBS on local cable]” (lines 37-42).

Preferences. The children expressed aspects of the program that they liked and did not like. MARSHALL said “I like *everything* about it. I don’t really not like anything” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, lines 78-79). His favorite parts of the show were “when Paco does monkey impressions and whenever Maya gets an idea” (lines 81-82).

When Maya has an “*Eso es!*” moment, her ponytail goes up over her head and her ponytail holder lights up. For some reason, this bothered WILL. He said he would change “that thing going whoooooo” as he demonstrated Maya’s ponytail going in the air (personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, line 72). He said he would simply make the “two things light up” to show she has an idea (line 74). His favorite part of the show was “when they play soccer” (line 80).

NIKI’s favorite part of the program was “when Maya has an idea” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 176). Like MARSHALL, NIKI said there was not anything she did not like about the show (line 178). Her sister CORRIE’s favorite episode was the story when the cat and the duck were lost. When I asked her

what her favorite parts of the show were, she said, “Um, let’s say [pause] everything” (CORRIE, personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 76). Toward the end of the interview, CORRIE told me “I like to watch *Maya & Miguel* a LOT” (lines 122-123).

CHRIS said she enjoyed “whenever Maya starts getting a good idea and then her brother’s like, ‘I don’t think so’” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, lines 73-74). When I asked ELOY which was his favorite episode, he said “I like all of them” (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, line 69). With regard to character preferences expressed by the children, WILL liked Theo best, while RANJAN preferred Paco, and ELOY chose Miguel. The other children did not state a preference.

I also asked the mothers about their own likes and dislikes of the show, as well as why they thought their children and others enjoyed watching the program. SYDNEY said her own children like its freshness and that other kids likely watch it for the same reason – that “it’s a newer show and the kids are very lively on it” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, lines 29-30). SYDNEY liked the “sense of family” (line 63). What she did not like were the “role reversal issues” (line 67). These evidently clashed with her own beliefs. She feels strongly that a husband should be the head of the household and a wife should take care of and teach the children at home. This is somewhat in opposition to the appearance of equality between Santiago and Rosa, who own a pet shop together, and the children, who are generally led by Maya and who go to public school.

JANET thought that her daughter, CHRIS, was attracted to it because it is a cartoon. When I asked her why other children might watch, she said, “I just think it’s good [pause] a good cartoon, a good show, good entertainment. It’s positive – I mean, I

look at it that way . . . it had a positive meaning, positive message” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, lines 27-29). JANET also liked the lack of violence – “that [episode] didn’t have any kind of violence – not even the bear [laugh], and I think that’s positive, that’s good” (lines 44-45). JANET also appreciated how the creators “correlate” the two languages to help those who do not understand one or the other.

MARCIA said her daughters probably watch the program because of the timing and the fact that it is on PBS. When considering why others watch, MARCIA suggested it was “probably [the] lack of other shows, and I think the fact that it’s good, clean, safe, fun” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, lines 45-46). For herself, MARCIA appreciated that:

it’s one of the few things I don’t really have to worry about. I can be in here cooking, or I can be here grading papers and not have to worry about what’s going to be on television. So the safety factor is big for me. It’s real important. (lines 38-40)

MARCIA also liked the diversity in the program and the involvement of the grandmother.

I asked SANUTHI why she thought other children watched the program. She said she guessed that other children like the show for the same reasons her son likes it. She said, “I think RANJAN may like it because of the skateboard. He likes sports: the skateboard and basketball, so maybe those kinds of things? Other kids also like those things” (personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, lines 19-21).

ANNA liked the use of Spanish on the program. She also said, “I think the storylines are humorous. The lessons that are taught, the characters – I think the characters are good. It’s just good animation” (personal communication – in person, Nov.

10, 2007, lines 18-19). According to ANNA, her “favorite part would be just how creative [Maya] gets when she . . . tries to . . . solve a problem” (lines 50-52). ANNA liked how the program “lets [Maya] use her imagination and creativity” (line 52). When I asked ANNA if there were any other comments she would like to make at the end of the interview, she said “I really enjoy the show” (line 180). There were no negatives pointed out by ANNA about the program, other than that the previous time slot for the program worked better for her family instead of the show’s current morning position.

The humor of the program resonated well with the children. Several mentioned that this was the main reason they watched. When I asked MARSHALL why he watched the show, he said, “Because I think it’s funny” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 17). What was interesting is that he did not list the same reason for why other children watch the show. He answered with hesitancy: “to learn Spanish?” (line 19). NIKI said that she watches the show because “it’s fun” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 126). When NIKI was asked to compare the program with other shows, she again referred to its humor and said it is “pretty funny” (line 155).

When CORRIE described the show for someone who had never seen it, she commented on its humor twice: “it’s real funny” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 47) and “it’s a real funny show” (line 49). When asked how it compares to other shows, she replied, “It’s not like other shows – it’s just funny” (lines 52-53). I asked CORRIE what she liked about the show, and she told me “I like, um, it because it makes me laugh” (line 66). When asked to recall something that made her laugh, CORRIE told me about the episode “Rhymes with ‘Gato.’” She said, “When,

when, when, um, when the cat got lost and the duck was lost. That was SO funny. A *lost duck!* [ha ha] That made me laugh” (lines 67-69).

Humor was expressed with regard to consumption habits, too. When MARSHALL discussed watching the show with his cousin, I asked what they did while they watched. He told me, “We pretty much laughed” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 109).

Frequency. With regard to how often they viewed the program, the answers ranged from a few times a month shared by NIKI (though her sister said she watched it every day), to “all the days except Saturday” (RANJAN, personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, line 36). Four of the children watched every day (MARSHALL, CORRIE, RANJAN, and CHRIS). ELOY had watched daily until the afternoon line-up recently changed at his PBS station. HOLLY was unsure of how often she tuned in to the program.

Because of a time lapse in interviews of the KROFT siblings, I perhaps got a glimpse at how a show’s popularity wanes over time, especially once re-runs begin to be the norm. When MARSHALL was interviewed, he said he watched daily with his brother and sister, but when WILL was interviewed a year later, he said he watched the program two times a week.

Other programs. When asked about other television viewing, the children named from one to 12 other programs they enjoy watching, and two children listed entire networks (PBS, Disney, Nickelodeon, N) in addition to specific programs. I also asked about their favorite programs, and the only ones with the same answer were those who said they did not know (HOLLY, NIKI, and ELOY). CORRIE made it clear that *Maya &*

Miguel was one of her favorites throughout the interview. MARSHALL listed *Dragon Tales*; WILL listed *Arthur*; CHRIS said *Degrassi: The Next Generation*; and RANJAN named *Cyberchase* as his top choice.

According to their mothers, the children all watched television daily. JANET guessed that CHRIS watched zero to one hour a day during the week. JANET explained, “Well, right now with homework and stuff, even if she can get in an hour, if she doesn’t have homework after 9, she might watch with us after 9” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, lines 140-141). CHRIS on the other hand, told me she watched television *while* doing her homework beginning around 4 p.m. ANNA, SYDNEY, and MARCIA each estimated their children’s weekday viewing time to be 2 hours.

SANUTHI did not know exactly how long RANJAN watched television. She told me she tries to keep it to 30 minutes per day at home, but while she’s at work and “he’s at the babysitter’s place, he watches maybe all the day” (SANUTHI, personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, line 43).

On the weekends, the mothers reported an increase of television viewing by their children. MARCIA guessed her girls watch 2 to 3 hours per day on the weekends. SYDNEY also estimated 3 hours of viewing by her children on Saturdays and Sundays. JANET assumed that CHRIS watched 4 to 5 hours on each weekend day, while ANNA said ELOY watches 8 hours on the weekends because his father is a big sports fan and they “start off with the first kickoff at noon” and go until the “last game of the night” (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, line 162). This answer struck me as surprisingly honest. From various studies I have read and from personal experience, it seems that people will report a “couple” of hours of viewing, but if they stop to count it

up, it is generally much more. I was also intrigued with SANUTHI's concern for how much television her son is watching and yet her realization that at the babysitter's house, RANJAN could be watching television the entire time she is gone.

Confused consumption. In each family, the children reported media use differently from their parents. For example, while SYDNEY listed 11 different programs, she did not mention the two that her sons said were their favorites (*Dragon Tales* and *Arthur*). In fact, 10 of the shows she listed were not mentioned by her children at all. Three of the four programs listed by MARCIA were not offered by her daughters, either. JANET only listed one particular program, while her daughter, CHRIS, listed nine. It was also interesting to me that when asked for a list of programs, three of the mothers and two of the children listed entire channels/networks instead of answering my question for specific programs. From that answer, it was impossible to know how many shows and what types of programs they tend to watch.

Frequency of overall parental viewing. The parents' viewing hours were reported in similar numbers. SANUTHI reported watching only 30 minutes of television each day. "Normally, after coming back from school, while we are taking the tea in the evening, we watch *Everybody Loves Raymond*" (SANUTHI, personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, lines 48-50). She explained that "having two kids makes it very hard to spend time in front of the TV" (lines 51-52). MARCIA said she watches an hour and a half on weekdays and perhaps 4 hours on the weekend days. ANNA reported an average of 2 hours on weekdays and 8 on weekends. SYDNEY said she watches an average of 2 hours everyday. JANET also estimated her weekday viewing at 2 hours but her weekend viewing somewhere between 2 and 3 hours.

Viewing environment. When I asked the children if their parents watched *Maya & Miguel* with them, the general consensus of the children was that they usually watched by themselves. NIKI said “My parents are usually doing their own thing” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 171). CHRIS said, “Usually whenever I watch it, they are home or they’re just getting home. They usually do stuff and they kind of watch. [pause] They come in and watch a little bit then go do whatever they do” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, lines 55-57). The children mentioned that siblings, cousins, and friends sometimes watched with them. Six of the eight children said they did not discuss the program with their friends or family. The two who did, HOLLY and WILL, are siblings. HOLLY said her brothers talk about what happened on the show that day to her parents “before I get a chance” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 56).

MARCIA, JANET, and SANUTHI stated that they rarely watch the program with their children. SYDNEY and ANNA said they watch sometimes. According to ANNA, “I watch with him but not actually sitting down” (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, line 21). She explained, “Before, when it aired in the afternoon, I was in the kitchen cooking dinner. Now it airs in the morning, so I’m either feeding the baby or trying to get him ready” (lines 22-23). On the other hand, SYDNEY said that she will sit down to watch an entire episode when one comes on that she has not already seen. When I interviewed her, she guessed that happened 10 % of the time.

Overview of Maya & Miguel by Viewers

When I asked MARSHALL to describe the program, he told me it was about “a brother and a sister that speak Spanish” (personal communication – in person, April 3,

2006, line 24). MARSHALL, HOLLY, and WILL's mother, SYDNEY, described the program very similarly: "It's about a Hispanic family living in America . . . speaking Spanish at home, English with friends" (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, lines 18-19). When she first described the program, CHRIS' mother, JANET, also mentioned language, as well as culture. She said that it was "multicultural, bilingual" (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, line 15). ELOY's mother, ANNA, said:

I was describing it to my co-worker just the other day, and I was telling her it's almost like *Dora*, but it's not the educational level as *Dora*. Um, this is more advanced. *Dora*'s teaching you more Spanish. This one is just part of the conversation. So I don't know if it was meant to teach Spanish, but I think you really have to know a little bit in order to understand what's going on. (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, lines 10-14)

MARCIA focused more on family in her description: "I think it's a show about a brother and sister and a family and just how they live" (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, lines 28-29). Her television background came through as she said that "It's a typical, I don't know, issue-problem-solution type show" (lines 33-34). She added that it is "family oriented – I feel pretty safe letting my kids watch it" (lines 34-35).

CHRIS offered the most descriptive answer. She said:

The show's about a brother and sister that, uh, usually have fun adventures and have some fun bumps on the way where they kind of get caught up in stuff like that. They [pause] they have [pause] a little bird, a grandma, and [pause] a mom and a dad. Maya has two [pause] friends, and Miguel has two friends. They usually do stuff together and [pause] they have a lot of fun. (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, lines 31-35)

NIKI's first description was that "there's a girl named Maya and a boy named Miguel" (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 146). When I asked NIKI to expand her answer she said, "Maya has a [pause] a ribbon that she wears in her hair, and

every time she has an idea, it lights up” (lines 149-150). I asked her if she could tell me anything else about the program, and she said, “I don’t know where they live, but [pause] in the show they talk about Mexico . . . a little bit” (lines 150-151).

When I asked WILL to describe the program for someone who had never seen it, he mentioned something none of the others had. He said “There’s a girl and a boy . . . and the girl always makes ideas and sometimes they work. – *What else?* – One of Miguel’s friends, he doesn’t have an arm” (personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, lines 35-36).

HOLLY said she would describe the show to someone who had not seen it by telling them it “teaches Spanish. It’s got all sorts of stuff” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 22). When I asked her to elaborate on the “stuff” she said, “I don’t know” (line 23).

RANJAN was not as helpful in his description most likely because he was shy. I had spoken a number of times with his mother on the bus, but this was my first time in their home and my first conversation directly with him. When I asked him “If you had to describe it to someone who’d never seen it before, what would you tell them?” his response was “About it” (personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, line 28). My efforts to elicit a more descriptive response were made in vain. He only said, “talk about it” (line 29) and “I don’t know” (line 30).

Similar to RANJAN, ELOY was reticent. He, too, was apparently very shy. Again, this was a situation in which I had never before been in the child’s home and was actually meeting both the mother and son for the first time in person. The mother seemed relatively comfortable – probably because of her friendship with my parents, but the son

demonstrated shyness in speaking with me even when we went to dinner with my family after the interview.

ELOY told me the program was about “Maya and Miguel” (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, line 34-35). I asked him what they do, and he responded that “they play” (line 35). When I asked what they play, he first spoke to his mother in Spanish and then told me they “play with their friends” (lines 36-37). After discussing what the program is about, I also asked the children what lessons they thought *Maya & Miguel* might be trying to teach them.

Education. The children seemed to understand that the program is educational. Several said it taught them Spanish (personal communications – in person, MARSHALL, line 20; CHRIS, lines 23-24, 64-65, 144-151; HOLLY, line 16, 22; RANJAN, lines 160-164). When I asked the children what they thought the program was trying to teach kids, I had a wide variety of answers. MARSHALL said “I don’t really know” as he wrinkled his eyebrows (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 137). HOLLY and RANJAN also said they did not know. CORRIE thought the program taught that “good ideas are always, always are good [*sic*]” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 148).

After pondering the question for a moment and furrowing her eyebrows, CHRIS said maybe the message was “to help kids probably understand, you know, like friendships and Spanish and family and stuff like that” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, lines 217-218). WILL said the show taught “how to speak different” and to “be nice” (personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, line

202). ELOY said the lesson was “to be safe” (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, line 103).

The mothers’ views of the educational content of *Maya & Miguel* varied, as well. SYDNEY thought the program taught about a “different culture” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 140) and that “family is important” (personal communication, line 141). JANET thought the show emphasized the importance of spending “time with your family” that “despite rain, or whatever, just make the best of it and have a good time because in the end, you have lasting memories” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, lines 111-113). MARCIA thought the overall message was “finding solutions” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 222). She said, “It’s fairly positive – there’s always a positive message in there” (lines 222-223). Closely related to the topic of educational messages within the program is the network on which it airs. The educational bent of the PBS network is what drew many positive comments from the mothers.

PBS. PBS was mentioned in a number of responses by both children and their mothers. NIKI said she watches “PBS Kids” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 104). CHRIS mentioned that some of her friends also watch PBS (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, line 177). When I asked HOLLY what other shows she watched besides *Maya & Miguel*, she said, “Usually all the shows on PBS” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 92).

JANET said when she comes in and out of the living room while her daughter, CHRIS, is watching television, “she’d have it on PBS” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, line 8). She also mentioned another PBS program that CHRIS had

been required to watch for school. When she answered my question about why CHRIS began watching, JANET said, “I think it was the sequence of cartoons that were on PBS” (line 11). On this same question, MARCIA mentioned the network, too – “it’s part of the PBS lineup” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, lines 37-38). Interestingly, MARCIA also mentioned that her 7-year-old daughter thought PBS was too young for her.

Several mothers commented on the safety quality of the network’s programming. SANUTHI commented that she felt safe with PBS. She said, “When [RANJAN] watches PBS, I don’t care, but when he watches another channel, yeah, we watch it, too . . . I always allow him to watch PBS” (personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, lines 24-27).

ANNA referred to both a positive and negative aspect of the program airing on PBS. She said, “I try for him to watch more of educational than entertainment, so I think that’s why PBS comes into play a lot because I think that’s [pause] what they do” (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, lines 145-147). ANNA added that with PBS shows, “he thinks it’s entertainment, when really he’s starting to learn math or, you know, manners or something like that” (lines 149-150). ANNA expressed concern, though, that *Maya & Miguel*’s “not one of those shows that people know of unless you are really tuned in to what PBS offers” (lines 181-182).

Mothers’ and Children’s Views of the Characters

The Santos Family. Because Maya and Miguel are brother and sister, and their parents, cousin, and grandmother play central roles in the storylines, it was only natural for the child participants and their mothers to mention the concept of “family” in their

interviews. For example, MARCIA commented, “I do like the family dynamics” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 129) and that she thought it was “good to show the cousins” (line 144). JANET described the show as “mostly [about] a Hispanic family” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, line 16). JANET noticed the “good relationship” between the husband and wife and that the father “had a good attitude” (lines 73, 78). JANET thought the episode she saw provided “a good lesson for kids to initiate things on their own and get families motivated . . . it’s [also] a good lesson for parents that we’re only young once” (lines 88-90). JANET also mentioned family when describing the show’s overall messages: “just take time and spend time with your family” (line 110).

According to ANNA, the portrayal of the family mirrored her own experiences in the Hispanic culture. She explained:

with the Spanish family, family is very important, so the fact that the grandma’s always around – that’s not, that’s not different or weird at all . . . With Tito coming in – him being a part, also – it’s the same with us; we grew up with my cousins. And so we were always connected and always hanging around each other. (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, lines 116-120)

For SYDNEY, the “sense of family” was what she said she liked best about the show (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 63). When I asked her how it compared with other programs, she said, “overall, I would say it’s above average because it has the family factor” (lines 71-72). SYDNEY thought the parents were more of “background players” (line 93). She was encouraged that Maya and Miguel are shown “thinking about other people, like their grandmother and their parents” (lines 136-137). SYDNEY also picked out that one of the overall messages of the show is “that family is important” (line 141).

I asked about what the Santos family is shown doing in the program and what the children thought about those activities. MARSHALL told me “they eat dinner. They go to soccer games with each other, and that’s pretty much it” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, lines 97-98). HOLLY thought what their family was shown doing seemed “normal for most people” (personal communication– in person, April 3, 2006, line 82). WILL thought their family was shown “having a good time” (personal communication, – in person, April 18, 2007, line 167). NIKI agreed – “they have fun” (personal communication– in person, May 24, 2006, line 221). When I asked what they were doing that was fun, she replied, “They always get into mischief” (NIKI, line 221). CHRIS said, “I think they have a lot of fun . . . together . . . yeah, they have real family things going on” (personal communication– in person, April 14, 2006, lines 168-169).

JANET thought it was realistic that the family was shown trying to do their best for each other; “I think a lot of us try to be positive and try to have time for our families” (personal communication– in person, April 14, 2006, lines 87-88).

Like MARCIA, who seemed displeased that the children were often shown by themselves, WILL picked up on some differences in supervision within the Santos family compared to his own. As he mentioned them, they caused his mother, SYDNEY, to laugh: “Maya and Miguel can go outside whenever they want” and “Sometimes they stay at home by themselves” (personal communication– in person, April 18, 2007, lines 162-163).

MARSHALL said the Santos family resembled his family because, “My mom likes to cook, my dad goes to work, HOLLY always gets an idea, and WILL likes to play” (personal communication– in person, April 3, 2006, lines 91-92). When I asked him how

the Santos family differed from his, he told me, “They have a pet and they live in a hotel [pause] and they live in an apartment” (lines 93-94). Like her brother, HOLLY also pointed out how the housing differed from her own family. In addition, she also mentioned that, as opposed to her, “They [pause] go to school [and] they have a pet” (personal communication– in person, April 3, 2006, line 78). [HOLLY and her brothers are home schooled]. She later mentioned school again, when I asked her to explain what made the characters seem real. She said the children all “go to school with their friends” (line 69).

I found NIKI’s response interesting when describing the similarities and differences between her family and Maya and Miguel’s.

Emily: How’s your family different?

NIKI: Our family’s boring [pause] sometimes.

Emily: It’s boring?

NIKI: Not *exactly*, but [pause]

Emily: Is there anything else where your family is a lot *like* Maya’s family?

NIKI: We have fun sometimes. (personal communication– in person, May 24, 2006, lines 214-217)

CORRIE agreed that the Santos family was not like her own. Her explanation was simply: “That’s because they’re different” (personal communication– in person, May 24, 2006, line 109-109). She also pointed out that “they do a lot of stuff that my parents don’t” (lines 112-113). She gave the example that the Santos family often does what Maya wants them to do. This seemed to signal that CORRIE felt her desires for certain family activities were not followed – that she did not have the power that Maya appeared to have.

MARCIA laughed at how her daughters had first said that the Santos family was nothing like theirs. When I asked for her opinion on how the Santos family compared to her own, she said, “Apparently they’re more exciting than we are!” (personal communication– in person, May 24, 2006, lines 202-203). MARCIA saw similarities with her own family, such as having two children, both parents working outside the home, and she thought that both families were “pretty easy going” (lines 205-206). She also noted similar characteristics with her sister-in-law’s family. She said, “I think it’s good to show the cousins . . . my sister-in-law is . . . Hispanic and their cousins are always around – so it’s always a big family – very family oriented” (lines 144-146).

ANNA pointed to the central position of food in Hispanic life. “It always revolves around food, and that’s very typical of our culture because everything we do usually revolves around food” (personal communication– in person, Nov. 10, 2007, lines 123-124). RANJAN pointed to a discrepancy related to food. He said one difference between his family and theirs was that the Santos “eat cheese” (personal communication– in person, July 21, 2006, line 178). This suggests that his family is perhaps vegan like many Hindus.

CHRIS used her own life experience to question the actions in a particular episode about a family camping trip: “Well, from my experiences, I guess, whenever they packed and they just went on, they would have – should have checked all the stuff and made sure they had *everything* before they put stuff in the car” (personal communication– in person, April 14, 2006, lines 137-139). Like NIKI, CHRIS noted that her family did have fun sometimes: “they have fun and my family has fun a lot” (line 158).

When asked to compare their families to the Santoses, the mothers pointed out various similarities and differences. SYDNEY said, “We don’t have Grandmother living with us. Um, Mom stays home. Dad works. Trying to instill in our kids that they need to be each other’s best friend and support. We speak only one language” (personal communication– in person, April 3, 2006, lines 126-128).

SYDNEY appreciated the emphasis on the program that “Maya and Miguel realize that they have each other and that they need to be best friends because they’re always going to be brother and sister and nothing can change that” (personal communication– in person, April 3, 2006, lines 77-79). I have heard her talk about this with relation to her own children – that one of the reasons they home school them is so their children will be closer to each other than she or her husband are to their siblings. She also commented that she did not care for how Maya and Miguel are shown to have a separate set of friends from each other, which is also tied to this belief.

When discussing the particular episode JANET saw that day, in which the family goes on a camping trip, she mentioned that:

If it would have been my dad, well, we never would have done it. Just the first little bit of adversity [laugh], we would have packed up and we would have been gone. My dad never did go camping. He was never into nature. (personal communication– in person, April 14, 2006, lines 115-117)

JANET noticed similarities in that “both parents work” (line 100) like she and her husband do, plus she said they “have pets and [pause] had a grandma [she frowned] – pretty, you know, general family stuff. I can relate with that” (lines 101-103). I would guess she frowned because this brought to mind her mother who passed away about 5 years ago.

Maya Santos. Maya was described by the children as “always getting into trouble” (MARSHALL, personal communication– in person, April 3, 2006, line 25), thinking “too much” (HOLLY, personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 25), “always makes ideas” (WILL, personal communication– in person, April 18, 2007 line 35), “when Maya has an idea it goes totally wrong” (NIKI, personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 139), “has good ideas [pause] to make money” (CORRIE, personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 82), and “gets along with others” (CHRIS, personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, line 86). NIKI also said, “She’s funny” (line 184). According to the mothers, she “seems to be the boss over Miguel” (SYDNEY, personal communication– in person, April 3, 2006, lines 66-67), uses “her imagination and her creativity” (ANNA, personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, line 52), a “very fun loving kid” (JANET, personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006 line 68), and helps her friends (ANNA). As far as a physical description, all RANJAN told me about Maya was that she was tall (only after I asked if she were short or tall) and looked like “a girl” (personal communication– in person, July 21, 2006, line 61).

ANNA noticed similarities between Maya and other Hispanic girls. According to ANNA, “I would say probably at that age she is a very typical Spanish girl” (personal communication– in person, Nov. 10, 2007, lines 60-61). She also tried to compare her with her niece and said “my niece is not even that old and she has a lot of the same characteristics” (lines 62-63). Later, I asked if she saw similarities with herself, too. This thought seemed to surprise her: “Umm, yeah, probably yeah. Yeah, ‘cause I’m always trying to solve all issues, yep” (lines 133-134).

CORRIE mentioned the “hairbow little thingy [pause] when she has ideas, it lights up” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 50 of NIKI’s interview). WILL also mentioned the “two things” that light up (personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, line 74) on Maya’s ponytail. NIKI, too, described the idea signal for Maya’s big ideas.

MARSHALL recognized a parallel of leadership shown on the program as “Maya gets an idea” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 82) and his older sister, HOLLY, who “always gets an idea” (line 92). Other children also pointed to Maya’s big plans (WILL, personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, line 35; NIKI, personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 139). CORRIE went beyond mentioning that Maya gets ideas and described how her friends “do what Maya says – they follow the great idea” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, lines 89-90). RANJAN, too, said something that showed that Maya is more than just an idea-person – he said she likes to “help others” (personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, line 59).

SYDNEY saw Maya’s leadership in a somewhat-negative light – that “she’s a little bossy and overbearing, but I think she has a good heart” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, lines 86-87).

MARCIA questioned the Lucy and Ricky format she had heard about with regard to the characterization of Maya and Miguel by saying:

I don’t really find it that “Lucy and Ricky” because I hear that, I would immediately think Lucy always gets in trouble, whereas Maya is not always the one in trouble. She’s not always the one in trouble, but she always has an idea to get them out of or into or something. (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, lines 30-33)

She described Maya as the “idea person” (line 110) and commented that Maya seems to be more prominent than Miguel – “you see Maya as sort of the leading character” (lines 112-113).

Maya’s leadership pleased ANNA. She mentioned that her favorite part in the storylines involved Maya’s creativity as she “tries to come up with an idea on how to solve a problem” (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, lines 51-52). She also described how Maya tried to help a friend who had stage fright. ANNA said,

She came up with an idea of how she can be on stage to ease his [pause] nervousness, so I like the way that she tried to tell him, “it’s OK for you to go on stage, you’ll do a great job, but if you need me, I’ll be right here” (lines 56-59).

ANNA described how a major theme of the show is that “Maya’s going to come up with the solution to a problem that’s going on” (lines 130-131). Similar to MARCIA and SYDNEY, ANNA also pointed out that Maya is “very in control of her brother” (line 62).

Miguel Santos. Miguel was described by the children as someone who “likes sports” (MARSHALL, personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 26; HOLLY, personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006 line 26), “likes to play soccer” (WILL, personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, line 98-99), and “doesn’t like Maya’s ideas” (NIKI, personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006 line 185).

As opposed to her description of Maya and her great ideas, CORRIE used the word boring to describe Miguel. CORRIE seemed to be disappointed with Miguel’s lack of support for Maya’s “good ideas” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 81) because, “He says, I think that’s not a good idea” (line 82). CHRIS thought the

opposite. She said, “he goes along with his sister’s ideas however weird they are” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, line 89).

RANJAN gave a number of details when describing Miguel: “not a round face” (personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, line 66-67), “he doesn’t have glasses” (line 68), “he has a blue shirt” (line 68-69), “his hair is brown” (line 69), “he works in the pet store” (line 70), “he wash[es] the dogs” (line 72), and he likes skateboarding, racing, soccer, basketball, and superheroes (lines 72-73). ELOY showed a similar preference in his choice of Miguel as his favorite character. He indicated that he liked Miguel because “he plays soccer” (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, line 23) and ELOY likes soccer (line 67). ELOY used “funny” to describe Miguel (line 30).

WILL demonstrated Miguel’s hairstyle by holding his hand up to show how it sweeps up (personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, line 99). WILL remembered correctly that Miguel wore a blue shirt (line 100).

Much like the child participants, JANET’s first description of Miguel was that he was “into sports” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, line 70). ANNA mentioned sports in her prediction for Miguel’s future – that perhaps he could play professional soccer (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, line 142). She also mentioned the more realistic future of taking over the family’s pet shop.

SYDNEY was concerned with him being portrayed as stupid sometimes and said she would “label him a good boy” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 89). MARCIA commented that Miguel “doesn’t seem as prominent in the shows that [she had] seen” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 112). Similarly,

ANNA saw that “Miguel is probably a follower – he goes with what she suggests. Um, very easy going. She’s the one that’s hyper, and he’s the one that’s very laid back” (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, lines 64-66).

While JANET thought “they got along well for brothers and sisters” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, line 70), SYDNEY said “sometimes they’re not very kind – to each other – Maya and Miguel” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, lines 68-69).

The Parents. Overall, the participants viewed Santiago and Rosa Santos as secondary characters. Because of that, they did not offer as many descriptions or opinions about them. JANET pointed to the calm manner Rosa and Santiago managed to maintain with their children. She mentioned that the parents “made time” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, line 62) to camp with their family and when things went awry, “they let things roll and didn’t [pause] overreact. I liked that” (line 64). On the other hand, MARCIA was bothered that “sometimes the whole show is done without a parent there” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 133).

When I asked MARCIA to describe the parents, she turned to NIKI and asked her: “Hey, does Maya’s mom work outside the house? What does she do?” (MARCIA, personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 184). NIKI responded that the mom gardens and that the father has a job as a soccer coach, neither of which is true (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 185 of MARCIA’s interview). MARCIA, whose husband was a soccer coach at one time, asked “He’s a soccer coach? For a *living*?” (lines 185-186). She finally asked me and I told her they owned a pet store. Later, NIKI responded to MARCIA when she asked another question: “How does our

family compare with Maya and Miguel's really?" (line 209). NIKI said "You're like the mom – always really happy. And then Daddy's a soccer coach" (line 210). MARCIA let NIKI know that the parents owned a pet store instead.

Later in the interview, MARCIA said, "I think they've shown them both working together in the pet store, and that's good" (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, lines 215-216). RANJAN, too, remembered that both the mom and dad work at a pet shop. ELOY recalled that both parents work, but he did not know where.

The mother: Rosa Santos. According to the children and mothers, Maya and Miguel's mother, Rosa, works (HOLLY, personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 27; SYDNEY, personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 66), "goes out to get groceries" (WILL, personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, line 102), and "cooks" (RANJAN, personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, line 108; WILL, line 105). Interestingly, WILL added the word "sometimes" before he said the mother cooks. MARCIA, like WILL and RANJAN, picked up on her cooking, too. WILL also remembered that Rosa wore a pink shirt (line 102). An 8-year-old boy picking up on the mother's shirt color – particularly the stereotypically feminine color of pink – did not fit my expectations.

CHRIS seemed to indicate that there was wisdom shown by Maya's mother and father in the camping episode. According to CHRIS, Rosa "seems kind of nice enough not to hurt Maya's feelings in this episode where she didn't want to tell Maya it was a bad idea doing this camping trip" (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, lines 94-95).

The father: Santiago Santos. Maya and Miguel's father, Santiago, "works . . . with their mom" (HOLLY, personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 29). According to WILL, "sometimes he's really funny" (personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, line 109). WILL also mentioned him working at a pet shop.

CHRIS described Santiago's reactions to the family camping trip:

He's nice as well to [pause] allow Maya and Miguel to just pack up for this trip for no apparent reason and then he doesn't get all mad like some people might would whenever they didn't have good clothing and [pause] whenever the tent fell down and stuff like that, so [pause] he just kind of improvised with something else whenever they didn't have the poles. (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, lines 98-102)

MARCIA also mentioned that Santiago "took them camping one time" (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 120). MARCIA remarked that he is "not necessarily a typical dad figure" (line 118).

Abuela Elena Chavez. Elena is Rosa's mother and Maya and Miguel's grandmother. When describing Abuela, HOLLY's only response was, "She bakes" (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 30). According to WILL, "she mainly cooks" (personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, lines 113-114). ELOY also mentioned that "she cooks" (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, line 55). NIKI said she "does stuff with them sometimes" and "she's fun" (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, lines 189-190). MARSHALL told me that Maya and Miguel's grandmother is like his except "she watches more TV" (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, lines 31-32).

CHRIS pointed out Abuela's leadership in the family. She mentioned that Abuela took the children to a baseball game so that Maya could get an autograph, though I am not sure Abuela knew Maya's intentions. CHRIS said, "she loves her grandchildren and

will really do anything for them and take them places” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, lines 104-105).

One of the reasons WILL said that Maya and Miguel’s family was “a little different” (personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, line 161) from his own was that the “grandmother is living with them” (line 161-162), though Abuela actually lives across the hall. I believe WILL picked up on this living arrangement because of his experience with his own grandmother living with him recently.

Abuela Elena came under some scrutiny with RANJAN. The first piece of information he would give me about the grandmother was that “she’s fat” (personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, line 130). I dug deeper and found that her hair is different from his grandmother’s hair. Abuela’s hair is “round” and “ash”-colored, compared to his grandmother’s short brown hair. At first he also told me they differed in cooking. In response, I asked:

Emily: Who likes to cook – their grandmother or your grandmother?

RANJAN: Anybody’s grandmother. (lines 146-147)

I tried to follow up but never came to a conclusion as to why he mentioned that as a difference. When I asked RANJAN what Abuela likes to do, he responded “help” (line 131). He did not specify a particular example of her helping.

ELOY’s only description of Abuela Elena was that “she cooks” (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, line 55). Because he has a Hispanic grandmother, I thought he might identify more with this character than he did. I asked if she were anything like his own grandmother – did she look similar or do anything similar, but he said no.

Each of the four mothers who were familiar with the grandmother, SYDNEY, JANET, MARCIA, and ANNA, spoke positively of her portrayal. MARCIA was encouraged with the representation of an older adult:

I think it's good that she's such an important [pause] part of the show, and they definitely, they show respect for her, and the kids treat her very, very cordially, and that's, that's really nice. Because you don't often see [pause] um, a grandparent in kids' shows period, and if so, if it's a regular show, they're pretty stereotypical – so I think it makes a nice mix. (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, lines 125-129)

MARCIA also commented that she thought that the grandmother was “a little more prominent than the mother” (lines 115-116). ANNA agreed that the “grandmother's brought into the storylines more than the mom is” (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, lines 68-69). ANNA described the grandmother as “available for her grandchildren – always giving them advice, always giving them her opinion . . . telling them of the way things were when she was their age and helping bring some of their background into – their culture – into their everyday life” (lines 70-73).

SYDNEY said she identified most with Abuela. She said, “I like the grandma, probably because I can relate to her 'cause she's always in the kitchen. She's there when the kids get home from school. She's [pause] more of a mother figure than a grandmother” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, lines 95-97).

Speaking from JANET's own experience, she saw her as the “typical grandma, making the tamales . . . wanting to be in the kitchen and feed people and can make a meal out of nothing” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, lines 75-77).

Paco, the pet parrot. “He's funny,” MARSHALL said about Paco (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 36). CHRIS and RANJAN also used the term “funny” to describe this bird. In fact, RANJAN said that is why Paco is his favorite

character – “just because he’s funny” (personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, line 126). I asked RANJAN what made Paco so funny, and he replied, “when he says it twice” (lines 49-50). When I asked RANJAN to describe Paco, he told me he came from “Innnnnndia” (line 124).

MARSHALL pointed to the presence of Paco as at least one aspect that made *Maya & Miguel* different from other shows (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 63). Paco “does monkey impressions” (lines 81-82). CHRIS listed Paco when she first described the show to me. She even gave him first billing: “They have [pause] a little bird, a grandma, and [pause] a mom and a dad” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, line 33). WILL was able to offer a number of details when describing Paco: “he’s red” (personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, line 125), “his beak is yellow” (line 126), and “he finds another parrot that’s blue that’s Maya and Miguel’s teacher’s” (lines 127-128).

HOLLY said Paco “likes to talk” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 34). According to CORRIE, “he talks a lot, very often, but when they leave him behind a lot, he doesn’t talk” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, lines 86-87). CORRIE showed a clear fascination with Paco the parrot and imitated him with great joy. She would squawk and repeat whatever lines he just said on the screen during the observation.

The mothers tended to recognize their children’s enjoyment of Paco, and they often enjoyed the scenes with Paco, too. MARCIA commented on her children’s love for this pet parrot. MARCIA said Paco is:

a fun part of the show. I think it's interesting he goes in all the food prep areas – that's kind of a negative there. I think he's a pet. The kids love him. You know, they love the Paco bit. They'll imitate him, you know. You'll hear CORRIE talk like a parrot, and kids just naturally love animals, so I think it's [a good idea] to get the animals in it. (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, lines 149-153)

SYDNEY also mentioned that “it makes me smile when I think of Paco because the kids think he's so funny” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 100).

ANNA remembered that Paco was “talkative” (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, line 85). JANET commented on Paco's bilingual abilities. She said, “I like him in that he was . . . bilingual, too . . . he would repeat some of the words *I* didn't know” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, lines 80-81). While she liked how he repeated words in both languages, JANET, however, thought it was a little too much to take Paco camping – “The bird went with them camping, so that's, that's kind of a close family. I was like, ‘Leave the bird at home!’” (lines 83-84).

Tito Chavez. Tito is Maya and Miguel's cousin. He is the son of Ernesto and Teresa, who have recently moved to the United States. Because of his recent immigration, Tito's accent is thicker than most of the other children's.

Tito was described as active and someone who “likes to play soccer” (MARSHALL, personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 36) and “sometimes he's . . . homesick” (CORRIE, personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006 line 97). RANJAN said “he likes superheroes” (personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, lines 80-81), “he likes blue” (line 83), and he “carries a snake” (line 198). MARSHALL said, “He's an active, funny little boy” (line 35). MARSHALL's sister, HOLLY, also described Tito as “funny” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 32).

When describing Tito, WILL's first response was that "he's the youngest," which echoes WILL's own birth order (personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, line 119-120). RANJAN was the only child to recall that Tito was a cousin. When I asked how Miguel knew Tito, RANJAN answered, "That's because they're in a family" (personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, line 88). I would guess this was significant to RANJAN because of the importance of family to him. Besides his mother, father, baby sister and another sibling on the way, he also communicates via computer with one set of his grandparents in Sri Lanka on a weekly basis. RANJAN's cultural identity also seemed to influence his response on where Tito was from: "China?" he asked (line 89).

After watching part of the wrestling episode during the observation, MARCIA commented:

I really had not realized Tito was so heavily Spanish. I think it's great because my girls are taking Spanish at school. For them, it's natural. And I really like the way they do it, because I can follow it myself and with my limited second-grade Spanish . . . I know I am always going to be able to follow the story. (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, lines 188-192)

The other mothers did not recall anything about Tito, other than ANNA hesitantly guessing that he was Maya and Miguel's cousin.

Friends. Maya has two friends who are often featured in storylines: Maggie and Chrissy. Miguel has two friends, Theo and Andy, who often play an important part in his life. Each of the children mentioned friends or friendship during their interviews except MARSHALL and CORRIE.

With RANJAN, the topic of friendship only came up when he mentioned that he watches the show with his friends (at his babysitter's house). ELOY also said he watched

the program with his friends, but then said no, he watched it at home. I am not sure why he first said “with friends” (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, line 83). The only other reference to friends made by ELOY was when he told me that Maya and Miguel “play with their friends” on the show (lines 36-37). CHRIS said she saw similarities with her friends and Maya’s: “I have friends that will help each other and me. I don’t have a brother, but [pause] I guess the friend part and [pause] seems like Maya has a lot of fun, and I do, too” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, lines 158-160).

When I interviewed HOLLY and asked her to describe each major character, she definitely knew who were friends.

Emily: What about Chrissy?

HOLLY: Ummmm, she’s Maya’s friend.

Emily: Do you know where she’s from?

HOLLY: No.

Emily: What about Maggie?

HOLLY: She’s Chinese.

Emily: Anything else about her?

HOLLY: She’s Maya *and* Chrissy’s friend.

Emily: What about Theo? What would you tell somebody about Theo?

HOLLY: He likes to read [pause] and is Miguel’s friend.

Emily: Anything else about Theo?

HOLLY: (shakes head no)

Emily: What about Andy?

HOLLY: He likes soccer, too.

Emily: Is there anything else about Andy?

HOLLY: He's Miguel's and Theo's friend. (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, lines 34-40)

Like HOLLY, NIKI described Chrissy and Maggie as friends of Maya's. WILL used the term when describing what Maya likes to do: "be with her friends and have fun" (personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, line 95), and in the description of one episode: "The three girls are friends, and they really mess it up when they try to help" (lines 89-90). Chrissy's and Maggie's actions described by the children included hanging out (MARSHALL, personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 39) and playing (RANJAN, personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, line 119).

CHRIS talked about friendship quite often throughout the interview. Like WILL, she describes one particular episode:

Whenever Maya and her friends are doing the book report on *The Three Musketeers* and they get into a big fight. Then Miguel . . . his two friends ask him to teach them on the soccer team. They get in a fight. Then they finally all become friends again. That's one I always remember. (CHRIS, personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, lines 79-82)

With regard to Theo and Andy, CHRIS said "I really remember them . . . getting in a real big fight" (lines 126-127). CHRIS was describing "Friends Forever?" in which Theo and Andy both ask Miguel to coach them before the tryouts for the new forward position on the soccer team. When the two boys find out Miguel was secretly coaching both of them, they are angry. While her description of how they resolved the fight was incorrect – she thought another child was awarded the forward position on the team, when actually both Theo and Andy were given that spot – she did come to the same conclusion – "then they found that was kind of dumb to fight" (lines 130-131).

CHRIS made more references to friendship than any of the other children. With regard to Maya, she said, “She’s really outgoing and she has some wacky ideas . . . She gets along with others and [pause] she likes hanging out with her bro-- her friends and I guess, her twin brother” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, lines 86-87). When describing Miguel, she said, “He goes along with his sister’s ideas however weird they are or whatever. He’ll help her out through any tough time or whatever. He’s a really good friend” (lines 89-90). I found it interesting that she used the term “friend” to describe Miguel’s relationship with his sister as opposed to saying he was a good brother.

CHRIS also used friendship terms to describe Chrissy, Maggie, Theo, and Andy. In her first description of the show for me, she mentioned that “Maya has two . . . friends, and Miguel has two friends. They usually do stuff together and . . . they have a lot of fun” (personal communication – in person, April 14, 2006, lines 33-35). She offered the most in-depth explanation of friendship as she said Chrissy and Maggie are “really good friends with Maya and Miguel. They like to do stuff together, like just hang around. I don’t know. And, I guess, whenever Maya’s feeling down or whatever, or they’re feeling down, they all help each other” (lines 117-120).

When describing Miguel’s friends, Theo and Andy, CORRIE said “they just like to, well, you know, do what boys do – *Like what?* – Um, like play soccer . . . and win trophies . . . stuff like that. All the boy stuff” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, lines 93-94). I found this interesting on several levels. First, her father has worked as a women’s soccer coach, and second, that such gender distinctions would be made by a 5-year-old girl.

SYDNEY was the main adult to talk about friendship. As mentioned above, she was pleased that Maya and Miguel were good friends but concerned that they had separate friends from each other. MARCIA also mentioned friends in the context of being concerned that the children on *Maya & Miguel* and on *Arthur* are often shown going places on their own without a parent.

When MARCIA was asked to describe Miguel's friends, she said, "I don't remember anything other than the soccer. I just remember they were playing soccer" (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, lines 166-167). This was a natural aspect for her to notice because her husband, as mentioned above, has been a soccer coach.

Andy. While RANJAN mentioned Andy wearing a "red shirt with flowers" (personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, line 101), MARSHALL said Andy "likes to play with Miguel" (personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, line 46) and "likes soccer" (line 39). The most distinctive feature about him, though, is that one of Andy's arms is not as long as the other – it appears to stop at the elbow. This congenital defect was mentioned by only two of the children when I asked them to describe this character.

MARSHALL told me that Andy "likes to play with Miguel" (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 46). When I asked MARSHALL whether he had noticed anything else about either of Miguel's friends, he said, "Andy only has one arm" (line 47). I asked MARSHALL what he thought about that, and he responded that it would "be hard [pause] to live with" (line 48). I asked him if they showed Andy doing things differently because of his disability. At first, MARSHALL told me that

Andy “can’t play football very good or baseball” (lines 49-50), but when I asked what sports he can play, he said, “basketball and baseball and soccer ball” (line 51) and that he was good at them. I asked MARSHALL what he thought about that – “He’s good at playing them for a kid with one arm” (lines 52-53).

I asked MARSHALL why he thought they chose to draw Andy with only one arm, and he responded questioningly, “Just in case some other kids with one arm watched it?” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, lines 54-55). When I asked him later about the realism of the characters, MARSHALL also referred to Andy’s disability. MARSHALL said, “There’s other kids out there with one arm, there’s other kids that are black, there’s other kids that are [pause] Chinese, that are Mexican (lines 57-59).

MARSHALL also mentioned the disability when I asked how the program was different from other shows: “Because it has Paco in it, a kid with one arm, and lots of other stuff” (personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, lines 63-64).

MARSHALL’s brother WILL also commented on Andy’s arm – “one of Miguel’s friends, he doesn’t have an arm” (personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, line 36). He made this statement even before I mentioned Andy. When I later asked him to describe Andy, WILL told me “He has blond short hair” (lines 138-139). When I prompted him further, he added that “he doesn’t have an arm” (lines 139-140).

I asked WILL what he thought of Andy not having a whole arm, and he said, “That it’s cool” (personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, line 39). I asked him if there were things Andy couldn’t do, and WILL said, he “can’t throw a ball with both hands” (line 41). In the program, however, Andy manages to play baseball and even

pitch. WILL also said that Andy played soccer. None of the other children mentioned Andy's disability at all.

ANNA was the only mother to mention Andy's disability. She said she liked that he was part of the variety of characters. "I really like the fact that they're bringing in a child like him into the storyline" (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, lines 92-93). She described the episode in which Andy is introduced:

the whole gang was amazed that he can play soccer and be involved in other sports and still be able to do it so well with just one arm. So he was proving to them that he's no different [pause] just because they had two arms and he has one. (lines 96-99)

Theo. According to the children, Theo "likes to play with . . . Miguel" (MARSHALL, personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 45), "likes to read" (HOLLY, personal communication – in person, April 3, 2006, line 38), "plays soccer" (WILL, personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, line 26), likes to "have fun" and "plays with his friends" (WILL, lines 142-143). RANJAN described Theo fixing an airplane (personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, line 94) and remembered Theo's green shirt. WILL also said "he has black hair" (lines 141-142).

ELOY picked up on a difference between himself and Theo. He commented that, "It looks like he has curly hair" (personal communication – in person, Nov. 10, 2007, line 49). I asked ELOY if he had curly hair, and he answered correctly that he did not.

WILL surprisingly identified most with Theo, who he said was his favorite character because of his soccer playing. His mother suggested that his choice was probably because his favorite color was green and that was the color of Theo's shirt. This still makes me wonder about his choice, though, because the White character, Andy,

generally wears a green shirt, too, and plays soccer. There must be something else about Theo that drew WILL to him.

Maggie. RANJAN correctly said that Maggie “has a bow on her hair” (personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, line 113). According to RANJAN, Maggie “jump ropes” (line 114). When asked about Maggie, WILL told me “she has long black hair” (personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, line 135). CHRIS and HOLLY recalled that Maggie was Chinese.

MARCIA pointed toward the presence of an Asian character as something that caught her attention. Because her two daughters were adopted from China, MARCIA said she noticed that one of the characters (Maggie) “looks Asian – her eyes are more almond” (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 157). She said, “When I saw her, I thought, there could be an Asian character, which was of interest to me” (line 158).

Chrissy. While some children remembered that Maggie had a connection with China, none of them recalled Chrissy’s connection with the Dominican Republic. What they did remember involved her appearance/dress and a pet.

WILL knew that Chrissy “always wears a pink thing on her head” (personal communication – in person, April 18, 2007, line 132). RANJAN told me that Chrissy “has skirts” (personal communication – in person, July 21, 2006, line 117). Finally, NIKI mentioned Yo-Yo, the cat, when she characterized Chrissy. None of the mothers commented specifically on Chrissy.

Observations

I observed each of the child participants as they watched one episode of *Maya & Miguel*. All of them sat in their living rooms to watch the program, and their televisions were in or on some type of entertainment center. For four of the families, the entertainment center was a piece of furniture, but for the FLINTS, it was built into the wall. All but ELOY's family had knick-knacks, such as ceramic items and souvenirs, on the entertainment center. The KROFTS and WOODS had VCRs. A DVD player was evident in each entertainment center except for the FLINTS'. There were photos on the entertainment centers of each family except the FLINTS and CLIFTS. The KROFTS and RATNARAJA families both had antennas on the entertainment centers, signaling a lack of cable television. The KROFTS' entertainment center was also decorated with candles, while the CLIFTS, WOODS, and RATNARAJAS had artificial flowers to accent their cabinets. The FLINTS, WOODS, and RATNARAJAS also had a clock in or on their entertainment centers.

With regard to their position in the rooms, each child sat on a couch during the episode except MARSHALL and HOLLY, because their brother occupied the couch. HOLLY sat on the floor for most of the show and on her mother's lap for a few minutes. MARSHALL sat on a chair positioned in front of the family's desktop computer. During the interview, he sat with his back to the computer.

Of the six children sitting on a couch, only two of those were directly across from the television. The other four were sitting where they had to turn their heads to the left to watch or had to lie back on the couch for them to face the screen.

For seven of the children, we watched the program as broadcast on PBS from 5 to 5:30 p.m. For ELOY, I played an episode from one of the DVDs sent by Scholastic Media because his local PBS affiliate airs the program at 7 a.m.

The television was already on when I entered the homes of the KROFTS and the WOODS. In both cases, the children were watching *Arthur*, the program on immediately before *Maya & Miguel* on PBS. Because of what CORRIE and NIKI said in their interviews, it sounds like they normally would have had *Arthur* on, too, but changed their routine because of the interviews I had with them before the show began. In addition, CORRIE and NIKI were the only children to eat a snack while watching the program.

In each instance except with ANNA and ELOY, the parents were in and out of the room during the episode. This seemed to signal that they felt comfortable enough with me to go about their normal routines. Some, like JANET, stayed longer than others, although during the interview I found out that was her first full episode to watch. She left the room when the extra footage began. MARSHALL, HOLLY, and WILL's mother, SYDNEY, left the room several times to put up dishes, get out ice, and reload and start the dishwasher. When she ran water in the kitchen, it became difficult for me to hear the program, but it did not seem to bother the children. When she was in the room, SYDNEY did various activities that seemed to send the message of boredom – she rocked in her recliner, read something, talked with her husband, and checked her nails.

While ANNA stayed in the room for the entire episode with ELOY, she said that was not normal. Usually she would have been cooking or getting the children ready for school while the television played. As opposed to my observation of SYDNEY, ANNA

and JANET seemed to enjoy the program during my observation of their families. They both smiled and laughed during the episode.

Reactions to broadcast. I could clearly see MARSHALL, WILL (on his second observation), NIKI, CHRIS and ELOY smile during the program. Because I know CORRIE laughed a number of times, I would assume she also smiled, though I did not make a note of it. CHRIS and ELOY also laughed during the episode. MARSHALL, HOLLY, WILL, NIKI, and RANJAN did not laugh aloud.

NIKI, CORRIE, and CHRIS said something aloud during their respective observations. NIKI let out an “uh-oh” (FLINT observation, May 24, 2006, line 68) about something on the program involving a former wrestler who was hiding behind a new identity. Tito, Maya, and Miguel thought they recognized him and tried to confirm their discovery. At the end of the episode, NIKI and her sister, CORRIE, both repeated a line from the program – the wrestler’s famous saying – “Always keep your cool!” (FLINT observation, line 91). Interestingly, it was CORRIE who said the phrase first, followed by the elder NIKI. Earlier in the episode, CORRIE also imitated Tito saying, “humina humina humina” (FLINT observation, line 19) and Maya yelling “Tiiiiitoooooooooh!” (FLINT observation, line 54). She giggled a number of times and once imitated Tito as he flexed his muscles challenging a wrestler to a fight.

CHRIS commented on events on the screen, such as, “They’re going to get lost” (WOOD observation, April 14, 2006, line 108) and “There goes their clothes!” (WOOD observation, line 101). Her mother, JANET, also made some comments during the program, such as “Oh, they happened to have clothespins!” (WOOD observation, line 93) and “Fork in the road” (WOOD observation, line 110). They uttered several sympathetic

“ooh”s and “ah”s related to the Santosos’ troubles during their camping trip in “Family Time.” CHRIS and JANET were also quite expressive nonverbally. JANET’s eyes widened, CHRIS’s eyebrows raised and furrowed, and she even covered her face with her hands when a skunk sprayed the Santos family.

One of the KROFT children also called out “Tito!” when he/she saw him on the screen, but I could not make out who said it. MARSHALL, HOLLY, and ELOY each whispered something to their mothers during the program, but did not talk loudly enough for me to hear.

Summary of Family Observations and Interviews

Overall the children were surprisingly quiet and still during the observations. My guess is that the children may have been self-conscious because of my presence, and knowing that I was purposefully there to observe them likely impacted their behavior. It is also plausible that a quiet, “couch potato” state might be normal viewing conduct. Not as much discussion occurred between family members as I hoped and expected, but there were still some interesting reactions to and imitations of events on the screen.

All of the television viewing I observed took place in the family living room. Most of the children sat on a couch looking toward an entertainment center. Most of the mothers left the room during the observation, even if only for a few minutes. This seemed to line up with their interviews, in which they and their children reported that the mothers often took care of other responsibilities while the children watched *Maya & Miguel*. It also seemed to point to a level of trust that they had toward me. There was a variety of consumption contexts reported as far as who is in the room when they normally watch – from viewing the program alone while doing homework to watching with friends at a

babysitter's house. The children and mothers indicated that the program is generally viewed on a daily or weekly basis.

The children appear to consume the program for its humor and its educational content, particularly Spanish. The parents want their children to consume the program because of the educational aspect and its safety – it is a program they feel comfortable letting their young children watch. There are a few items that parents mentioned that they did not like, including a lack of supervision on some episodes, the presence of earrings on the girls, and the portrayal of a working mother and a girl in leadership, while her brother lags somewhat behind.

The children appeared to identify with like-gendered characters. Boys gravitated toward Miguel; girls gravitated toward Maya. WILL chose Theo instead of Miguel as his favorite character, but his reasons for doing so were the same as those boys who chose Miguel – he plays soccer. This seems to indicate that the child viewers saw the characters of their own gender as “us” and the opposite gender as “them.”

With regard to the mothers, SYDNEY identified with Abuela, while ANNA identified with Maya. The other three mothers did not seem to identify with a particular character.

The children and mothers also made some identifications with the family as a whole. They referenced the number of children they had or their family's laid-back attitude. Some (e.g., CHRIS) identified with the relationships outside the family – Maya's friendship with Maggie and Chrissy.

While they all seemed to like her, none of the children made a real identification with Abuela. I really expected at least ELOY to see some similarities with his

grandmother, but he said he did not. With regard to the other adults in the family, the children and parents had little to say. This seemed to confirm the central focus of the program on the children rather than the parents. Santiago and Rosa are evidently –at least in the minds of the participants – supporting cast members rather than stars. They are “others” in the text, at least in the eyes of these viewers.

The children, and several of the mothers, love Paco. Because he is a different type of character than the others, I do not believe he was created for children to identify with, but rather for them to enjoy and learn from. The children I interviewed certainly enjoy his part in the storylines. I believe they do identify with his humor. RANJAN said Paco was his favorite character because he is funny. MARSHALL mentioned funny scenes with Paco, and CORRIE even imitated him several times during my visit with her. It is not clear whether it is his humor or his being an animal that attracts the children. It would be interesting to see if they would still show such a fascination if he were not funny.

With regard to race/ethnicity and culture, the families I interviewed did notice some differences between themselves and the characters or sometimes between themselves and other people they mentioned. These “us/them” oppositions included references to language use (e.g., pointing out that the Santos family speaks a different language from themselves), ethnic/racial group (e.g., describing the family as Hispanic or a character as black or Mexican), disability (e.g., one friend does not have an arm), and gender (e.g., in the Santos family, the mother works).

One mother (i.e., ANNA) used the words “us” and “our” in her interview describing the Hispanic culture – she clearly saw herself as a member of that group (“us”), while non-Hispanics would be “them.” In my interview with her, I was an

outsider, or “other,” because I could not understand her Spanish conversation with her son.

Interestingly, it was mothers with multiple races/ethnicities represented in their immediate families that pointed out and appreciated the diversity found in the program (i.e., ANNA and MARCIA). This made me realize that I, too, have multiple races/ethnicities in my immediate family (i.e., Navajo and White) that have likely made me more sensitive to the portrayal of “others” on television.

With regard to the children, two of them never seemed to be completely comfortable with me during the interviews. I believe this speaks to them seeing me as an “other.” Both of these boys (i.e., ELOY and RANJAN) are from minority groups within the United States, which I find interesting – was it my Whiteness that made them so shy? NIKI and CORRIE are also from minority group, but their parents are not – perhaps their adoption has acculturated them enough to make my Whiteness not intimidating?

CORRIE did point out that the family on the program is different from her own. One of those differences specifically involved power. She noticed that Maya generally had people follow her suggestions, while – in CORRIE’s eyes – that has not been true in her own life.

Several of the children mentioned other languages, nationalities, or races of the characters (e.g., Spanish, Mexico, black, lighter skin) and two mentioned Andy’s disability. Thus, they recognized there are “others” within the program. These children saw people who were not part of “us.” No negative comments were made about them being from other groups, but the children did notice a number of differences.

The Producers

While *Maya & Miguel* airs on PBS, it was Scholastic Inc. that produced the program. I use the term “producers” loosely to refer to anyone working with Scholastic in a capacity related to this children’s program. Over a period of more than two years, several of their former and current employees and advisors communicated with me about their experiences and thoughts about the show. Because of the location of Scholastic (i.e., New York), my interviews with the staff were conducted by e-mail and telephone.

Introduction of Production Participants

Beth Richman served as director of development for Scholastic Media and as a creative executive for *Maya & Miguel*. I began my communication with Richman in October 2005.

Federico Subervi, a mass communications professor, was selected as a member of the advisory board for *Maya & Miguel* because of his expertise in the area of Hispanic culture. I met him in the spring of 2006 and formally interviewed him in November 2007.

Project Director Mindy Figueroa was hired because of her marketing expertise. Our communication began in April 2006, when Richman left Scholastic. Figueroa also asked Cheryl Gotthelf, vice president of marketing and media relations, to answer a few questions on a questionnaire I e-mailed to her in September 2006.

Linda Kahn currently serves as the senior vice president for international television sales and merchandising at Scholastic Media. Our communication began in January 2008.

Background of Maya & Miguel's Creation

The division of Scholastic Inc. responsible for producing *Maya & Miguel* was Scholastic Media, recently renamed from Scholastic Entertainment. According to Beth Richman, the former director of development for Scholastic Media, that division covers interactive, television, and film and has approximately 70 employees of Scholastic Inc.'s overall staff of 1,300 (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 9, 2005).

According to Cheryl Gotthelf, vice-president of marketing and media relations, “This project was conceived in response to the social transformation taking place in American society from shifting demographics” (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, lines 9-11). She explained that “the 2000 Census confirmed this social transformation and Scholastic began to formulate plans to address the needs of the growing Hispanic population” (C. Gotthelf, lines 11-12). In her e-mail, Gotthelf described how the connection with the grant came about. She said that in 2002, a request for proposals was issued from the Department of Education, and Scholastic responded with a proposal for *Maya & Miguel*, “a multi-media project designed to promote diversity and celebrate ethnic and cultural differences” (lines 14-15).

Figueroa said the main goals of the program are: “(1) To promote the value of a culturally diverse society” and “(2) To support English language learners through the presentation of language in a natural context with a special emphasis on vocabulary” (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, lines 205-207).

Sixty-five shows were produced and have been shown in batches of unaired episodes. According to Richman, one week would include all new shows, and then the next week might have been all repeats. As of the spring of 2007, 50 of the 65 episodes

had aired. By the time I spoke with Figueroa in December 2007, all of the 65 episodes had been broadcast. According to Figueroa, these episodes will continue to be played on PBS as long as the individual stations choose to do so.

Target audience. According to Richman, in 2003, PBS decided to address an audience older than the preschoolers who were already watching their programming (like *Sesame Street*), so *Maya & Miguel* was one of two new shows aimed at these older children (6-11). This program block, which generally airs on weekday afternoons, is called “PBS Kids Go!”

With this program, Richman said Scholastic’s goal was to reach those 6- to 11-year-olds who PBS sought. The company’s research showed that the program’s “sweet spot” within that age group was the 6- to 8-year-old category (Figueroa, personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, line 703). According to Richman, they have had some good preschool audience numbers, too (Richman, personal communication – telephone, Dec. 9, 2005, lines 19-20). Richman said they made the show to appeal to all children regardless of language and culture, but they did want to provide the support for English learners as stated above.

In an e-mail from Richman, she said “*Maya & Miguel* has brought a new audience – kids 6-11 – to PBS Kids Go! (the afternoon block of programming targeting early school age children)” (personal communication – e-mail, Dec. 13, 2005, lines 6-7). She also wrote that “it is the #1 show on PBS KIDS GO” (line 8).

Richman offered specific ratings breakdowns by age and ethnicity, too: “*Maya & Miguel* ranks #9 with kids ages 6-8 among all children’s programs airing Monday through Friday” (personal communication – e-mail, Dec. 13, 2005, lines 9-10). With

children in the 6 to 11 group, she said the ratings were “on par with hit series like *Lizzie McGuire*, *Kim Possible* and *Sabrina*, and outperform favorites like *Hey Arnold* and *Scooby*” (lines 11-12). In the same e-mail, she wrote that “*Maya & Miguel* double delivers in two demographics! 30% of the audience is 6-11 and 27% is 2-5” (line 14). With regard to the size of the Hispanic audience, Richman said “*Maya*’s audience is 28% Hispanic. *Dora* only delivers 18% Hispanic viewers” (line 13). On the topic of gender, Richman wrote that “girls and boys both love *Maya*” (line 17).

Maya & Miguel Project Director Mindy Figueroa wrote that the program “anchors the PBS KIDS GO block” (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, line 69). She also commented on the standards of PBS: “Commitment to the highest quality content has earned PBS the unanimous endorsement of parents, children and industry leaders” (lines 70-71). Figueroa wrote that PBS “reaches 99% of U.S. TV [households],” which she said was more than Nickelodeon and the Disney Channel (line 72).

Writing the scripts. In our telephone conversation, Richman shared with me that all of the writers are freelancers. She said the program’s producers wanted the staff to be as diverse as the characters on the show, so there are a number of Hispanic writers. These writers brought their own experiences with them, and, according to Richman, “you can see people’s families on the show” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 9, 2005, lines 42-43). There are two head writers, one of whom is bilingual. Richman explained that when an English writer writes a show, then a bilingual writer reviews it and “tweaks” the language for it to be appropriate (line 44). There were also educational content advisors.

According to Richman (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 9, 2005), there were two educational content advisors: Ellen Riojas Clark of the University of Texas at San Antonio and Yolanda Platon of Puerto Rico. Richman said they are both bilingual and that during the production, they worked with the writers. Figueroa added that “the stories were being developed by the writers . . . and executive producer,” and “Dr. Ellen Clark was brought in . . . she looked at every single angle” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 797-800). With regard to the purposes of the program, Figueroa commented:

Whether our goal is to entertain or educate, to make kids laugh or learn both, the core of what we try to do is understand children’s hopes and dreams, their thoughts and feelings. Equipped with that we create stories and characters that resonate with them. (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, lines 60-62)

According to Richman, when developing *Maya & Miguel*, Scholastic tried to create a “wonderful family” with whom everyone would want to spend time (line 25).

In an e-mail, Gotthelf expressed her views of the impact children’s television can have and what that means for producers:

As producers of children’s media, we have the opportunity and the responsibility to use emerging technologies to foster a greater understanding of pluralism. Helping children understand that there is value in diversity and that our country benefits from contributions of different groups of people is work I am personally proud of. (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, lines 37-41)

Federico Subervi, a cultural advisor for the program, also described the educational purposes of the program – “to help Latino children learn English and at the same time value their culture, value diversity, value interacting, interactions among children with different cultural background [pause] learning to solve problems amicably” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 65-68). Subervi continued that, “all of

that is, I believe, part of the outcome that's already been observed with the program” (lines 68-69).

Subervi also pointed out the difference between the educational goals of *Maya & Miguel* compared to some commercial programming. According to Subervi, commercial producers want “large audiences that they can sell. That’s not necessarily the case for *Maya & Miguel* – they want a program that serves the community, social purpose. So the starting point for them is different” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 429-431).

Background for language decisions. Closely tied to the topics of culture, race, and ethnicity, is the concept of language. This was a foundational issue for *Maya & Miguel* as mentioned above in the show’s goals. Figueroa said:

Through extensive research published by many experts and the advice from our 15 own advisors, we learned that in order for English Language Learners (ELL) to learn a second language, it is important that their native/mother tongue/language is integrated and treated with dignity and respect to create a “safe” environment. Additionally, Native English Language Speakers think, speaking another language, in particular Spanish, is cool and good for them. The use of Spanish is a very deliberate formula in the show, in which English and Spanish will be used in complete sentences to avoid Spanglish. Also, most Spanish is used to reinforce a thought, to express something that is unique in the Latino/Hispanic culture, or to depict how bilingual people speak in real life and experience the best of both worlds. All of the Santos family are completely bilingual—that is, the parents, the twins and Abuela Elena. (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, lines 132-141)

Beth Richman said the production team was aware that “no one’s going to become fluent watching” the show, but they wanted to provide support for English language learners and teach them usable English (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 9, 2005, line 12). Not only were they interested in teaching language but also culture: “Exposure to language is exposure to culture” (B. Richman, lines 14-15). According to Richman, they

want the children to see that there is “value in learning more than one language,” and that it is good to have friends who speak other languages (lines 15-16).

Research. According to Richman, the production of the show began with a review of the literature, review of the current market of children’s television, and the selection of a group of advisors. She said there were people with a variety of areas of expertise.

Richman said that Scholastic Media performed formative and summative research on the program. For the formative test, they used storyboards and two scripts read by the actors on CD. For those tests, they looked at whether the children followed the story and whether they thought it was funny. They also tested some complete episodes in the field.

When I interviewed Richman by telephone in December 2005, she said they were testing children’s comprehension and attitudes, especially toward culture, in a summative evaluation using pre- and post-test questionnaires. A private firm conducted the research. Richman told me she would keep me “in the loop” about the results (personal communication – telephone, lines 59-60). Unfortunately, Richman left Scholastic in March 2006, and when I interviewed Figueroa in December 2007, she told me the company’s research results were not accessible for people outside the company; however, Figueroa summarized some of the results for me. She said that they exposed children to the program over a two-week period and found that viewing positively affects behavior and attitudes related to diversity (i.e., skin color, accents) (M. Figueroa, personal communication -- telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 709-713).

In a previous e-mail message, Figueroa also shared particular high points from the research, which she said was conducted with children 6 to 11 years old “from all backgrounds” (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, lines 76-77). She wrote

that they liked the “incorporation of animals (Paco in particular)”; they also appreciated the humor and the relationships between the characters (lines 78-80). These children also liked the “presentation of a close, mutually-respectful, happy family” and “the group of mutually supportive friends” (lines 82-83). Finally, they liked the Spanish within the program and “the adventures that the kids undertake” (lines 84-85). She also reported that the children said the characters “were like people who are actually real” (line 87).

Figueroa said that the program was “well received both by Latinos and non-Latino kids” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, line 696). She said the non-Latino participants “*thought*, which is verbatim, they said that, uh, being bilingual and speaking Spanish was very cool” (lines 700-701, emphasis in original). The research also informed the producers that “the show was not only for English language learners, but it was for English natives that . . . were learning . . . words in Spanish” (lines 703-705). Figueroa mentioned that English speakers learning Spanish “wasn’t part of the . . . initial goal” (lines 705-706), but that the production team learned that it was happening once the research was complete.

Subervi commented that the research on *Maya & Miguel* was “fascinating” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, line 379). He said, “I attended at least one or two meetings during which the findings were, were summarized, and I, I was just saying, ‘This is fantastic research! And future producers of programs should know this’” (lines 379-381).

Figueroa shared some other quotes from the children who participated in their research. According to Figueroa, one child said, “It’s good for kids who speak Spanish but want to speak English so bad” (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, line

147). Another quote from a child that Figueroa included in her e-mail said, “Because you could learn words and it is fun to understand. It gives your brain energy to learn” (line 151).

Creating and Producing the Show

Figueroa explained the process of creating the show. She said, “Our development and production process was a multi-tiered collaborative process, with writers, content experts and producers at the core” (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, lines 26-27). She explained further that, “Stories and scripts were developed with ongoing infusion of feedback from three key domains: Scholastic’s internal experts, external advisors in diversity, media, and the needs of second language learners, and third party-research [*sic*]” (lines 27-32). Figueroa wrote:

This is the opportunity of a lifetime, to be involved in a project that has such a social and emotional impact on our society. For me, as a Latina, it is very special to be part of a show that depicts Hispanics in a positive way and that is sending a strong message of tolerance and diversity. It is a legacy for future generations who hopefully will benefit from it. (lines 43-46)

Subervi offered details on the process of production from his vantage point as the cultural advisor. He said he was asked “to give input to a bit of the concept and then to . . . the drawings, the scripts, and the preliminary, very preliminary show . . . so I received those by mail, [and] sent back my comments” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 20-23). He described his work further: “We were sent materials then flown to New York where we had the meetings, and we gave our feedback on the concept, the drawings, scripts” and “kept in touch” (lines 26-28). In those meetings in New York, Subervi said all of the advisory board members had a chance to discuss the program with each other.

Subervi was invited to join the group to specifically examine the portrayal of culture. “For me it was just the cultural relevance and accuracy . . . overall general input. Some things that came across my desk – early videos, well, whatever I could provide my opinions on, I would” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 36-38). This was not a new role for him because he had also served as the cultural advisor for *Dora the Explorer*. I asked him why he agreed to work on *Maya & Miguel*, and he told me his goals included “contributing my . . . critical insights about such a, an outstanding program. I liked the concept and [pause] was delighted to have been asked to participate” (lines 52-54).

I asked him how his role compared between the two series. He replied, “For *Dora*, it was only two trips, for *Maya & Miguel*, I think at least three or four. We had telephone conferences . . . for both, but [*Maya & Miguel*] was a lot more involved and longer” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 372-374).

Subervi recalled two situations in which he suggested a change in *Maya & Miguel*. The first involved the wording of a script:

I remember contributing to one of the scripts once because they had [the father] saying that his favorite breakfast was huevos rancheros – um, that may be his favorite Mexican breakfast, it’s not . . . the breakfast that Puerto Ricans would have on a normal basis . . . So they changed the script to say, ‘oh, my favorite *Mexican* breakfast,’ so it wouldn’t come across as a Puerto Rican saying that the favorite breakfast of Puerto Ricans is huevos rancheros. It’s a minor little thing, but [pause] it shows the, the value of having cultural accuracy even in an, in an entertainment show of that type. (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 73-81, emphasis in original)

Subervi thought that each advisor had been sent a sample of the episodes to review. He also recalled his involvement with the first drawings of two of the characters which he said “were not acceptable” (line 184). According to Subervi, the sketches showed “the

grandmother as the cantankerous [pause] ‘Mammy.’” (lines 185-186). He also said, “The father had the Pancho Villa type of moustache . . . that was one of those really quick . . . changes. . . the grandmother was made more modern and slim, and the father certainly lost his Pancho Villa look” (lines 186-192).

Figueroa explained that she “was hired for the project” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 310-311). She was contacted by a headhunter for the job. Figueroa said, “I loved the idea of the show and uh, how it was going to make an impact . . . in the community and how [it could] become a legacy” (lines 313-314). When she was hired, some of the work had already been done – “there was a proposal, there was a concept” (lines 318-319). She said they had basically figured out “what the storyline was going to be – it’s like the story treatment, the show treatment . . . that was already in place” (lines 320-321).

When Figueroa joined Scholastic in October 2003, she said they were in the process of hiring the production group, including the animators and voice talent (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 322-323). She explained that Scholastic had just received the grant during the summer of 2003, and so the executive producer had recently hired the producer and animation director, “so they could start building the team” (line 326). Figueroa continued to describe her role:

when I came on board, I started working with them as far as the . . . production process, so that I . . . could develop the brand essence, I could develop the brand strategy. I could . . . create, uh, something out of nothing, quite honestly, so I could go around in a road show and . . . sell the product around the country – sell the show actually. (lines 327-331)

This was Figueroa’s first experience with children’s programming, which she said “made it more [she drew in a breath] more interesting and challenging” (lines 365-366).

Although she was not part of the group selecting the voice talent, Figueroa said:

my understanding was that the executive creator definitely wanted to have . . . [a] very talented group of actors, and . . . wanted to have a very diverse group of actors that will make the show very legit . . . authentic. She was looking for authenticity. (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 461-465)

Figueroa explained that the show's creator, Deborah Forte, "tapped into the best voices . . . in Hollywood for kids' characters" and then she found the top Latino and non-Latino actors for the adult roles (line 466). Candi Milo and Nika Futterman were selected to be the major child voices, while Lucy Liu was hired to voice Maggie, Lupe Ontiveros as Abuela, Elizabeth Peña as Rosa, Carlos Ponce as Santiago, and Erik Estrada as several characters, including Señor Felipe, the mailman. Online, I had only seen Estrada listed for Señor Felipe, yet I thought I recognized his voice elsewhere. Figueroa confirmed this and said, "He was many different voices" (line 476).

Figueroa also told me about the actual animation process. While almost everything was done in either New York or Los Angeles, the animation was done in Korea. Figueroa explained that "they have really mastered animation, from what I learned" (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 513-514). She commented that there were two reasons they sent the animation to Korea. First, most traditional animation houses have evidently closed in the United States. While there are a few, such as Dreamworks and Pixar, Figueroa said this "wasn't the type of animation" they wanted for *Maya & Miguel* (line 519). I believe she was stating a preference for line drawings as opposed to computer-generated artwork. Second, Figueroa said, having the animation done in Korea was "more cost effective" (line 521).

As the team produced the show, one of their major goals was the inclusion of both Spanish and English. The original goal was to help Spanish-speaking children learn

English, but as mentioned above, research showed them that the opposite training was possible, too.

Language use. According to Richman, they tried to have at least three English words that were tied to the storyline in each episode, though “there is no magic formula” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 9, 2005, line 63). The connection to the storyline was made to help comprehension. Richman said they knew that the words must be functional, relevant, related to the background of the audience, and used multiple times in each script in order to be successful in teaching English. Richman added that they often used cognates.

Richman said that the Spanish words used in the program were mainly used to support the English vocabulary presented in the program. According to Richman, code switching takes place in complete sentences that sometimes reinforce a request, define a word, or introduce a new topic, but they are not necessarily there to give a definition.

While the language in the program was not Subervi’s focus, he said there were language experts on the advisory board who “were very much into the language [pause] the level of language, if it was right for . . . the age targeted” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 34-35). Subervi liked the use of Spanish and commented: “I can’t say that any and every individual Latino kid of that age would have that fluency or, or that accent, or that approach, but it’s, it’s a very nice, from my point of view, a very nice representation” (lines 149-151).

Once the program was created, it was Figueroa’s job to promote it to local PBS stations, to community leaders, and to the U.S. public at large.

Promotion

According to Figueroa, the money for marketing the program came out of the Department of Education and Ready to Learn grant given to Scholastic. She explained that the money was supposed to last three years. Figueroa said they have been able to “*extend* it as much as possible” by becoming “*extremely* creative” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 205-206, emphasis in original).

Getting Maya & Miguel on the air. When she was hired in October 2003, one of Figueroa’s jobs was to sell the show. This involved visiting “local PBS stations as well as potential sponsors as well as . . . community leaders that we wanted to engage and get . . . their buy-in” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 331-333). Figueroa explained that “each PBS station works independently . . . they’re not like your traditional networks” – because of that, they hired people inside the PBS system to help communicate with the stations and “let them know how the show is performing, how are they performing. We look at data, we look at research, we look at ratings, and we pretty much, um, package everything together” (lines 77-82). By doing so, Figueroa explained that they can “continue to communicate and have that two-way communication street with them” and that way “the show continues to be relevant and the programmers continue to . . . feature . . . *Maya & Miguel* in the slots that we want” (lines 82-85).

Because each PBS station operates independently, the programmer may move shows to the time slots where they perform best in that locality. According to Figueroa, “there are many other shows that are, you know, being produced by PBS, so they always have to be shuffling around and looking at time slots” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 97-98). Figueroa explained where *Maya & Miguel*

currently stands: “we’ve been lucky that . . . we’ve been around for four years and now we’re gearing up for the fifth year, and . . . we’re still maintaining our own” (lines 100-101). Specifically, she said that during a strategy meeting the previous week, they learned that their ratings were the same as the previous year. According to Figueroa:

It’s very competitive, but one of the great things that . . . we learned . . . was that *Maya & Miguel* is holding its own space on ratings. We haven’t declined . . . year versus year. We *are* flat, but that is good, you know, in a declining, uh, kids’ space. (lines 281-284, emphasis in original)

Although no more shows will be produced, Figueroa and her team continue to promote the program trying to spread the word to new viewers. Figueroa had just returned from a meeting with the *Maya & Miguel* team to discuss their plans for next year. She said, “we’re really excited about it ‘cause we had a phenomenal, phenomenal year in our four season launch,” and they were pleased that the “show continues to be embraced by the community” (lines 58-62). Figueroa continues to work as a consultant for Scholastic and is still considered a project director for *Maya & Miguel*. Her responsibilities include “coming up with the ideas to . . . reenergize the brand, to continue building the brand . . . the whole marketing outreach and . . . station relations” (lines 65-68). Though a team works with her, Figueroa said, “I’m basically the architect of . . . how do we put it together” (lines 68-69).

I asked Figueroa to further explain how she maintains station relationships within the PBS system. According to Figueroa, what the team does “besides the regular marketing efforts” is to look at “what is the message, what is the theme” and how they will make sure “*Maya & Miguel* looks very fresh in the eyes of our target audience” (personal communication – telephone, lines 71-74). She said, “we also engage . . . one of the PBS stations to help us . . . do outreach into the community . . . through the network

of all PBS stations across the country, as well as engaging the stations directly” (lines 74-77).

Figueroa has also promoted the program using more non-traditional methods. As opposed to the cross-platform ownership of a Viacom or other large media conglomerate, Figueroa said:

I depend on PBS whether or not they want to do that or not, so sometimes I go *outside* of PBS because *they* don’t have the money to do it. So the only way to . . . cross-promote is, is through all the other ancillary . . . vehicles. (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 269-272, emphasis in original)

For example, *Maya & Miguel* partnered with the Parks and Recreation Centers for Earth Day. According to Figueroa, Scholastic provided materials “bringing consciousness to the kids” about taking care of the Earth (line 141). Figueroa said the Parks and Recreation service distributed this brochure, which was tied to a particular episode of *Maya & Miguel*, “so they could use it as one of the activities for the kids” (lines 144-145).

Another non-traditional promotional method was related to sports. Because soccer is featured so prominently on the program, it was only fitting that Scholastic coordinate some efforts in association with various soccer entities. According to Figueroa, they partnered with U.S. Youth Soccer in 2007 – “we went to a 12-city tour across the country,” which involved more than 30,000 kids (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 147-148). In this particular initiative, they provided activities for children to do at weekend soccer tournaments in between their games. Figueroa said the activities included “a soccer inflatable game” where the kids could win soccer “trading cards from *Maya & Miguel* with different characters” (lines 154-157). A second station provided the children an opportunity to watch an episode of the show, while a third

station provided the kids a chance to have their pictures made with *Maya & Miguel* characters.

Strategy. According to Figueroa, “one of the things that we claim as . . . part of our strategy this year, is that we wanted . . . *Maya & Miguel* to own diversity and community as part of their . . . core values” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 163-165). Because of that strategy, Figueroa explained that the team decided, “OK, let’s really go out, out to the marketplace. Let’s go out there to the communities, *any* kind of communities, whether Anglo, purple . . . yellow, you know, whatever it is, but we want to be there” (lines 166-168, emphasis in original). Figueroa said they went from 20 or so events in 2006 to 79 events in 2007. Figueroa stated that “*Maya & Miguel* now is one of those few children’s shows that really, really has . . . claimed the space” (lines 172-173). She explained that the program was more visible because of these efforts, and it was in the grassroots arena where they “owned” diversity (lines 174-175).

Also in the grassroots efforts, Figueroa and her team have placed *Maya & Miguel* in a central position with Día de los Niños. This holiday is explained on the National Latino Children’s Institute Web site:

El Día de los Niños Celebrating Young Americans is a gift from the Latino community to all children. Many nations throughout the world, and especially within the Western hemisphere celebrate “Día de los Niños” on April 30th to honor and celebrate children—who represent the hope and dreams of every community. (n.p.)

According to Figueroa, “I think we have done something very smart” by being the first children’s program to claim Día de los Niños (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 248-251). Four years ago, they began with five cities and this year 30

cities participated – “so now we have Maya and Miguel . . . they’re the avatars of the Día de los Niños in these cities” (lines 253-254).

For Día de los Niños, Figueroa said Maya and Miguel “either participate in a parade or in a street fair or a booth where the children” can have their pictures made with the characters or get stickers or temporary tattoos (personal communication – telephone, lines 254-255). Figueroa said, “that really has paid off a lot” (lines 256-257). According to Figueroa, *Maya & Miguel* has also claimed Hispanic Heritage Month. By making connections with those two celebrations, Figueroa explained that the program has “two nice pillars . . . at the beginning of the summer and the end of the summer that we totally own, and I think that that’s something . . . to be reckoned with” (lines 258-260). Figueroa pointed out that by having a variety of races and ethnicities, the show could be connected with not only Hispanic Heritage Month, but “besides *that* we can also do it with African American, with Asian American and so forth . . . in the future” (lines 808-809, emphasis in original).

Figueroa mentioned the competition the program finds itself up against – “that’s another thing you have to bear in mind in terms of the budget – we were dealing with a non-commercial space . . . versus a very commercial space” with companies such as Viacom, which produced *Dora the Explorer* (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 261-263). She added that even though “Viacom has been under a lot of . . . financial issues . . . they own the, the pipeline,” which allows them to “cross-promote” and put together in-house promotions (lines 264-266). Figueroa said, “It’s cheap for them. . . It’s not for us. We have to outsource it, so that’s a big difference” (lines 267-268).

The three years of funding from the Department of Education and Ready to Learn grants have been stretched to four years, and perhaps five, as Figueroa and her team have creatively and carefully selected what they think are the best tactics to reach the target audience. Figueroa said, “We tested . . . doing commercials on TV, we tested print, we tested radio, we tested online, we tested grassroots . . . experiential marketing . . . mommy bloggers . . . text messaging . . . all of that” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 208-211). I asked Figueroa to further explain the “mommy bloggers” effort. She said this was a new tactic taken in 2007:

We literally, in a very . . . cyberspace mode, we knock on their doors and . . . basically ask permission to talk to them about *Maya & Miguel* and offer . . . to send a free DVD if they will review it with their kids and get the reaction and blog about it. (lines 213-215)

Figueroa said the results were “fantastic” (line 216). She said they found and contacted 500 “mommy bloggers” (line 217). According to Figueroa, “people that never heard about it . . . now for the first time were exposed to it” (lines 223-224). Figueroa said, “it was good. It was a good learning experience, and I hope to . . . continue utilizing that” (lines 224-225).

When I asked Figueroa whether the television advertising she tested was run on Spanish stations, she quickly said, “No, no, no . . . we went after *kids*. So you know they’re not . . . watching Univision or Telemundo” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 232-234, emphasis in original). Figueroa explained further, “we’re going after *every* kid . . . this is a general market” program “that happens to be about Latinos,” and because of that she said, “I’m going after every kid out there that wants to watch, wants to have an alternative of a fun entertaining show, and . . . something that is in a way very innocent, but at the same time it’s realistic” (lines 234-238, emphasis in

original). With her promotions of the show, Figueroa said the most successful vehicles seemed to be the Web and the grassroots efforts.

Audience. I broached the subject of Hispanic viewership of the program with Figueroa and Subervi, because I had a difficult time finding Hispanic viewers of the program in our area. Most Hispanics I knew or met had never heard of the program. Subervi said many kids he knew watched it. He said people who found out that he was the cultural advisor for the program would always tell him, “Oh, really! Our kids love it” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, line 275). Subervi thought that “part of the problem” was where I live (personal communication, line 280). I suggested that perhaps PBS was not a highly viewed channel by Hispanics, but he said “no, it’s a manner of [pause] promotion for it that may not have reached certain segments of the population . . . not that ‘Oh, I know it’s there, and I don’t prefer to watch it’” (lines 283-284). He offered the analogy of the tree that falls in the forest and the question of whether it makes a noise: “Well, it hasn’t made a noise with people who haven’t heard about it, but once they do, they say, really, ‘wow’” (lines 287-288).

Figueroa said *Maya & Miguel* is important to PBS because it brings in some new audience demographics, both in age and race/ethnicity. She explained that PBS:

owned the pre-school space, and . . . one of the things that *Maya* helped them do . . . was to bring in, along with *Arthur* and a couple of other shows, to bring in a, a little bit of an older audience – that 6 to 8, but it’s a very competitive environment with Nick when you have the *Hannah Montanas* of the world and all that . . . and you have tons of thousands of platforms to promote [laugh] the heck out of it. (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, line 275-280)

With regard to race/ethnicity demographics, Figueroa said that she thinks PBS will continue to air the program because it “brings something to PBS . . . it’s the only show

that really addresses diversity and . . . a cultural point of view . . . for kids, and it, it behooves them . . . to keep it” (lines 289-292).

Figueroa explained that there was a recent incident between the Latino community and PBS over a Ken Burns documentary that left out the Latino experience of World War II. She said, “they were in last production stages” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, line 300) when this was discovered, and “they got a *lot* of heat from . . . Latino senators and Latino Congress people,” (lines 296-297, emphasis in original) so that Burns re-edited the film. She said the reason she mentioned this was that “PBS is supposed to be inclusive” (lines 303-304), which the production team tried to do with *Maya & Miguel*.

Figueroa said, while this children’s program “was intended and is intended for the *entire* audience spectrum,” it “has been able to build an audience” and increase the “Latino audience that, uh, PBS *didn’t* have before” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 344-347, emphasis in original). Specifically, she said that 30% of the viewers of *Maya & Miguel* are Hispanic. Figueroa pointed out: “That’s significant” (line 349).

Merchandising. According to Figueroa, the merchandising effort is part of “the overall mix, although that’s handled by another division within the company” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 112-113). She said that she did “interact with them” and explained that “*Maya & Miguel* had hits and misses” (line 115). The biggest hit evidently came with clothing. Figueroa said, “On the apparel side, we were very successful . . . in stores such as Target” (lines 115-116). Toys were not as successful, but according to Figueroa “that’s the story of a lot of shows, kids’ shows like

that. There's a lot of competition," and it depends on the financial backing "to cut through the clutter" (lines 117-120).

Currently, Figueroa said, the company is in a partnership with ConAgra, which developed fruit snacks with a *Maya & Miguel* theme. According to Figueroa, "that's coming along very nicely . . . I've seen the packaging and the fruit snacks are delicious" (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 126-129). She added, "We're very confident that's going to work out really nicely" (line 130). Figueroa also mentioned previous merchandising partnerships with Casa Fiesta, a "Latino-focused product" including "fried beans, and tacos, and so forth" (lines 132-133). In her phone interview, Richman also told me of a Maya doll, which said 10 phrases in English and Spanish when the heart on her necklace is pressed. Other promotional activities include a Web site and the release of several DVDs by Lions Gate.

Repurposed? A fascinating twist on all of the time and thought put into the use of Spanish and English in the scripts is that, according to Figueroa, the series has been sold to more than 70 foreign countries, some of whom dub their own language over it. Kahn, show is in charge of these sales, explained the process of selling the program overseas. She said they "will take several episodes and we will meet with broadcasters" (L. Kahn, personal communication – telephone, March 27, 2008, line 54). Often their presentations involve other materials, such as flyers or brochures. She said, "it might be a PowerPoint presentation on the characters, the philosophy of the show, and of course, in any meeting, we're showing people why a program, *Maya & Miguel* in this case . . . makes sense for them" (lines 58-61). Before making such a presentation, Kahn and her sales people must "do a lot of homework on each of these people that I'm talking to to see if, in fact, in this

case *Maya & Miguel*, is a fit” (lines 65-66). Sometimes these networks cover “a broad region and in other cases it’s just a very specific country” (lines 145-146). For each of these networks, the program is sold for “a finite period of time” (line 216). After that period is over, the broadcaster can choose to renew the contract or give it up so that it can be sold to another broadcaster in the area. According to Kahn, there are no fixed prices for license fees; they vary country to country.

I asked Subervi what he thought about the sale and dubbing of the program, and his reply seemed to show an internal struggle:

Well, it’s a different purpose . . . Selling it to those countries is just to have a [pause] a secondary market and profits from it. . . . the educational lessons of the exported show relate to the overall message of cultural understanding, cultural . . . interactions, of the interactions between the kids – of harmony in . . . the face of, of conflicts and getting into zany problems and troubles and how they overcome them. It is not a purpose of . . . teaching a second language or teaching English. . . . The moment it’s dubbed . . . that purpose is gone and the other purpose remains. In other, in other words, the, you know, the family harmony, the, the collaboration, the dealing with the handicapped kid – all of those lessons remain [pause] The, the specific one of . . . learning English for a Spanish speaker is lost the moment you have the, the translation. (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 351-363)

I asked Figueroa the same question – What do you think about the sale of the show to other countries? She replied, “I think it’s fantastic” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, line 369). She explained that *Maya & Miguel* is now a “world brand that . . . Scholastic is trying to sell, to *build*, and . . . the most amazing thing that, you know, the first ones to embrace the show were not necessarily other Latino . . . countries” (lines 369-371, emphasis in original). She said she thought Israel was one of the first countries that purchased *Maya & Miguel*. She listed other countries where the program is on including Turkey and France, and other regions like Asia and Latin America. Figueroa said, “I think the show is doing like number three . . . or so in France alone, so yes, it’s

fascinating . . . and the interesting thing is that we're in Latin American through Cartoon Network" (lines 372-376).

Figueroa said she works with Kahn on the international sales efforts "because the brand essence and the brand architecture has to be the same . . . that's what I [pause] build, and then she takes that and she builds it into customized packages according to each culture" because each country will have different requirements (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 380-384).

I asked Figueroa whether the profits from the international sales were able to add to her promotion fund. She explained that all of those "funds are to cover the baseline" (personal communication, Dec. 7, 2007, line 459) because Scholastic spent "double the amount" (line 458) given by the Department of Education and other agencies. Figueroa said, it was a "very expensive proposition" (line 456).

Kahn said they offer international networks the "option of dubbing the program completely into their local language . . . or dubbing it and keeping the Spanish in" (personal communication – telephone, March 27, 2008, lines 82-83). According to Kahn, "the Spanish repeats what's been said in English . . . so it's not essential . . . to moving the plot forward. It has other purposes, but not to moving the plot forward" (lines 84-87). Kahn offered France as an example of a country where the broadcasters kept the Spanish within the program. While one might wonder how or why a Latino-focused program would be selected for broadcast in France, Kahn explained that:

one of the things that they wanted to do was they wanted to applaud, in *general*, a diverse society and the fact that people speak different languages, they look different, they . . . prize different things, they have different kinds of families and different kind of friends, and that was . . . a very important thing to the broadcaster (lines 88-92, emphasis in original).

Kahn added, “you watch the show and you think those girls are French” (lines 94-95).

Other countries have dubbed the program in Hebrew and Arabic, among other languages (see Appendix R). When a country plans to dub the program, Kahn explained that they generally “will send us voice tests [pause] because, you know, *we* know the characters better than anybody else and so we want to be sure . . . that they get the quality of the . . . voice” (personal communication – telephone, March 27, 2008, lines 109-111, emphasis in original). When the French dub was created, for example, Kahn said that Scholastic worked closely with the French broadcaster – they were “*very* closely involved because it’s really quite important” (line 104, emphasis in original). The process of dubbing the program varies by country.

Kahn and a small team of sales people sell the program around the world with the goal “to get it on TV” (personal communication – telephone, March 27, 2008, line 154). Kahn said, “We’re looking for the broadest possible distribution of every program” (line 126). That means that *Maya & Miguel* is on public networks in some countries and commercial networks in others. For example, the broadcast rights are held by France 5 and BBC, which are both public networks, and by Cartoon Latin America, which is commercial. Kahn explained that “it really depends on . . . country by country or region by region what makes the most *sense* in . . . a particular market” (lines 132-133, emphasis in original). Kahn said:

We look at each market, we look at the specific program that we have, and we’re looking at: what is it about, [pause] is it animated, is it live action, what is the target age group, how many episodes are there, what’s the running time of the episodes, and we look at each broadcaster in that particular country, and we say, “OK, where do we think this would best fit in? . . . Where would it be most comfortable? Where would it attract the most kids? What other programs does the TV network run?” . . . you’ve got to *really* know [pause] the countries and the networks. (lines 163-174, emphasis in original)

Kahn stated that “we *love* the programs we produce, and we want to find, just as we find the best home *here*, we want to find the best homes everywhere else” (lines 183-184, emphasis in original).

With regard to the language within the program, Kahn said she and the potential broadcasters “talk a lot about . . . the language” (L. Kahn, personal communication – telephone, March 27, 2008, lines 331-332). The topic led to a number of “*really* interesting philosophical conversations with the buyers about this” (lines 385-386, emphasis in original). She said that some broadcasters were unsure of the Spanish.

According to Kahn:

When we were selling it around the world, the language question came up, and they said, “well, we don’t speak Spanish here” . . . and we said, “you know what, that’s OK, but there’s something else that’s a second language, and everybody can related to that experience” (lines 332-337).

Kahn said that some broadcasters “chose to keep the Spanish in because they felt it was really enriching for their viewers” (lines 339-340). For some, “they left the Spanish in . . . because it was cool . . . there was a real cachet to having some of the Spanish in there” (line 366-368). She said others decided dubbing the program into one language made more sense to them. The dubbing decision was left up to the individual broadcasters because “what mattered was their personal decision and what they thought would be best in their own country” (lines 387-388). Personally, Kahn believes the use of multiple languages in the U.S. version of the program is “great because it’s . . . our world” (lines 360-361).

Portrayal of Characters

Similar to the children’s and parents’ interviews, I asked Figueroa to describe the program in her own words for someone who had never seen it. She wrote:

Lively and colorful, the series chronicles the adventures, and sometimes misadventures, of 10 year-old siblings Maya & Miguel Santos, and features their family, relatives and a richly diverse neighborhood of friends. This never-a-dull moment situation comedy revolves around Maya's well-intended meddling in her family and friend's lives, ultimately leading her to create new quandaries to fix. While every episode will take humorous twists and turns, the underlying message is the importance of doing well for the family and community, and the philosophy that shared happiness is greater than personal gain. (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, lines 50-56)

Federico Subervi said, "I like all of the characters – their creativeness, their . . . inventiveness" (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 174-175). Figueroa said "all are great friends and super cool kids. They all support each other, including the parents" (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, line 125). Figueroa explained, "Everyone brings something to the table to figure out how to resolve a problem. They all come from a good place and are great role models and values to emulate" (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, lines 126-127). According to Subervi, the characters are like "any other kids . . . raised in a mixed urban environment. . . It's an ideal situation, but it's not that far from the truth for some kids" (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 146-148).

New America. These portrayals were perhaps impacted by the financial support that Scholastic sought. According to Figueroa, the grant Scholastic received was about the "new America . . . it was about representing what is happening in our country. It's a very multicultural environment" and because of that, they needed to represent and include "as many characters as we could that would be authentic" (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 651-654). This discussion brought up the idea of research again, and Figueroa said:

one thing about Scholastic I have to tell you is . . . everything is researched. Everything is done very . . . thoroughly [pause] to make sure that, you know, everything is going to be portrayed . . . in the right way. The last thing that Scholastic wants to do from a cultural perspective, uh, as a company is . . . be in the middle of a, of a *storm* [laugh], if you will” (lines 666-670, emphasis in original).

Overall messages. When asked to share the show’s overall messages from his perspective, Subervi thought for a moment and then listed interracial harmony, interethnic collaboration “to solve problems, family harmony, family [pause] togetherness, the value of learning . . . Of course, the, the value of celebrating cultural heritage – or cultural heritages, because there’s not just one, there’s a few” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 215-219).

According to Kahn, there are messages relating to family, community, and friendship. She said,

this idea of two kids, these twins, who think that . . . they can solve *everybody’s* problems [pause] *just* from their sheer wit and energy and desire to do good is really important, and the notion of the *community* being more important than just doing something for me, me, me, me, me is really an important thing, and what people love about *Maya & Miguel* is they love the stories. The stories are funny, they’re heartwarming . . . you’ve got this great family, you’ve got lots of friends, *and* they see the community coming together, and that’s really great. (personal communication – telephone, March 27, 2008, lines 67-75, emphasis in original)

Kahn said that even when the program is dubbed, the “universal themes of community and family” are evident (line 373).

Comparisons. With regard to comparisons to other programs, Figueroa wrote that “when it comes to *Maya & Miguel*, the series has created a positive portrayal of a bi-lingual, bi-cultural family that is unprecedented in children’s media” (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, lines 64-65).

When I asked Subervi how *Maya & Miguel* compared with the other series he advised, *Dora the Explorer*, he explained that “*Dora* is aimed at preschool kids. *Maya & Miguel* is for . . . elementary school kids” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 58-59). I asked if he saw differences between them with regard to culture and representation – “Oh, yes! *Maya & Miguel*’s a lot more diverse, richer, complex interaction with children or cartoon characters of different backgrounds” (lines 60-61). He also said the plots for *Maya & Miguel* were more complicated than *Dora*’s (lines 61-63).

While comparisons to other programs were mentioned by the other production staff/advisors, Kahn never mentioned a competing show. Kahn said that when selling the program, she will “sell its assets” as opposed to saying “we have a program, and we think it’s better than X, Y, and Z” (lines 327-330).

The family. According to Richman, the producers wanted to create a “wonderful family” that everyone would want to know and with whom they would want to spend time (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 9, 2005, lines 25-26). Figueroa also mentioned the positive, middle-class family role models that Deborah Forte, the executive producer, wanted to create (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, lines 161-162). According to Figueroa, there were some very specific thoughts behind the portrayal of the family:

The Santos family [are] long-time U.S. residents:

Acculturated-they have adapted the cultural traits of their new home country

Modern bicultural & bilingual- representing a range of language proficiencies and . . . accents.

They will serve as our model for “traveling between two cultures” without losing their identity

The Santos family shops at major retail stores, like Wal-Mart; is up on current styles, eats their favorite U.S. fare, as well as Mexican & Puerto Rican food

Rosa & Santiago came to the U.S. as children and speak English with a slight accent. They take pride in maintaining their home language and culture

Rosa & Santiago speak to each other, show affection and convey their values in a way that is representative of their cultural heritage (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, lines 164-175).

Subervi spoke positively of the final results. He said, “I was captivated by . . . the family . . . not that far from what I recall with my wife and myself and our daughter,” as well as his mother “who would visit frequently. She didn’t have an apartment across the street, but she would visit, and she was cool for the kids” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 160-163). Like Abuela Elena, Subervi said his mother would do many things for the children around her, such as cooking and sewing. He said, “they adored to be by her. It was very, very cordial family relations. Not the typical dysfunctional families of bickering that are constantly repeated on TV shows and movies and whatnot” (lines 164-166).

Figueroa further described the results of audience research conducted by Scholastic on *Maya & Miguel* with regard to the family portrayal. According to Figueroa, they found that Latino children “saw themselves in the show, and they say, ‘I have a family like that’” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 696-697).

Kahn made several references to the family. She referred to it as a “great family” that people love (personal communication – telephone, March 27, 2008, line 73). She said she believed children could see a reflection of themselves: “I think every kid does because you’ve got this great family” (lines 289-292). She described the interactions between “the siblings who drive each other crazy, but you know, of course, they love each other, and they ultimately really *help* each other” (lines 299-300, emphasis in original) and how Miguel often “has to pick up the pieces” after Maya does something (line 296). Kahn also said broadcasters like showing the variety of families in the world (line 91).

Culture, race, & ethnicity. The cultural portrayal of characters was a large part of *Maya & Miguel*, and it is what pleased some of the production team members the most.

In an e-mail, Figueroa explained her hopes for the show’s impact on her own family:

I have two nephews, ages 7 and 5, and depending on their school schedule they watch or tape *Maya & Miguel* almost every day. They like the show for the same reasons all other kids do, and it is my hope that they feel proud of their 50% Latino heritage and language when watching the show and “seeing” themselves in the show. (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, lines 96-99)

Subervi said, “Overall, what I like is that the kids value their culture, their heritage, their grandmother” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 144-145).

I also asked Kahn what she hoped the children watching the show would gain from it. She said:

I hope they gain that the world is, you know, made up of all sorts of people, and . . . I think there’s this overriding theme that it’s not just about me. That there’s things that we can do for *all* of us to make the world a better place . . . is a great message. And it’s not done in a syrupy *way*, it’s just these are natural situations. (L. Kahn, personal communication – telephone, March 27, 2008, lines 353-356, emphasis in original)

When I asked her why she thought children in other countries watch *Maya & Miguel*, Kahn replied, “They see themselves” (line 347). She described the basic storyline with which she believes viewers are connecting: “you’ve got your friends, you’re on a mission, you *know* you’re right – you may not be right – but you *know* you’re right, you’re convinced and you’re going to do anything you can” (lines 347-349, emphasis in original). Kahn paraphrased the children’s attitudes as “Hey, I’m 10, but I can do this. I’m 10 but I can take on the world” (lines 374-375). Kahn said, “I think the exuberance of the characters and their humor really, really connect” (lines 349-350). According to Kahn, friendship is another point that connects well with children viewing the program: “I think this is something else that also resonates with . . . kids all over the world . . . friendship, because you see strong friendships among the kids” (lines 297-299). Kahn herself said she could “absolutely relate to these stories and these kids [pause] and the family” (lines 344-345).

I asked Figueroa about the selection of the characters’ backgrounds. She told me the decisions were “research based” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, line 486). She explained the choice for making several of the characters Mexican is that “when you break down the . . . Latino population in America, the 40 to 45 million people, 60 to 65% are of Mexican descent . . . so you have to represent the majority” (lines 486-488). With regard to the Puerto Rican characters, she explained that the Mexican population is “followed by Puerto Ricans” at about 10% (line 489). She continued, “then Dominicans, Cubans . . . tend to be more in the, you know, 5% range . . . so, the two largest subgroups based on the U.S. census are both Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, so that was very deliberate[ly] done” (lines 492-495).

When I asked Subervi the same question about the choice of heritage for the main characters, he also pointed out that, “The folks who produce the program are in New York,” so besides the census figures, “they have familiarity with the Puerto Rican community” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 115-117).

I asked Figueroa why there were no South American representatives in the program, and she said “although they as a *group*, as a *combined* group, may be higher than Puerto Ricans . . . you cannot say, oh, this is a South American [laugh]” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 490-492, emphasis in original).

One of the other groups that seemed to be absent to me were Cubans. I asked both Figueroa and Subervi why there were no major characters from Cuba. Figueroa pointed back to the census numbers. Subervi said the ethnicities were decided before he was brought on board. In viewing a newer episode, I discovered there was a Cuban substitute teacher featured on the episode “Crushed.” In that show with Miss Cisneros, they show the Cuban flag, mention some Cuban food (plantains and black beans), and discuss a famous Cuban poet José Martí.

Figueroa said there were other connections to Cuba, though, even though they were not evident on the screen. For example, Figueroa said Carlos Ponce, who voices Santiago, “considers himself Cubarican . . . he was born in Puerto Rico, but his parents are of Cuban descent” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 500-501). She gave another example of the variety of nationalities represented in the creation of the show: Carlos Alazraqui, who voiced Paco, is Argentinean. According to Figueroa, “whether it was *in* the show itself or outside the show, you could see” other groups reflected in the program (lines 502-503, emphasis in original), “so whether it was in the

forefront . . . or at the back end of the show . . . we tried to cover the bases” (lines 504-505). She also said the entire production team was “very diverse” (line 506) including people from Russia, Poland, Holland, and Korea.

While Mexican heritage is the most prominent among U.S. Hispanics, Figueroa said the show sought “balance” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, line 801). She said, “We wanted to make sure that we were not focusing just on the *Mexican* culture” (lines 801-802, emphasis in original). Instead, they “wanted to create a balance with the Puerto Rican culture because the characters were from both and then we also wanted to give the chance . . . to showcase the other . . . kids in the team” (lines 802-805).

With regard to cultural references, I asked Figueroa about a particular episode, “Miguel’s Wonderful Life.” In the episode, Maya and Miguel talk about waiting up for Santa Claus. Being from Texas, I have heard Hispanic people refer to Pancho Clos and wondered why that cultural reference was not included in the storyline. Surprisingly, to me, Figueroa had never heard of Pancho Clos. She said, “This is the first time I’ve heard it . . . it’s definitely not Puerto Rican” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, line 846).

Also in that episode, the children opened one present on Christmas Eve and expected more from Santa the next day. I know some families have a tradition of opening presents on Christmas Eve, and I wondered if this were a Puerto Rican custom. Figueroa explained that in Puerto Rico, families and friends get together on Christmas Eve for “a formal dinner” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 868-869). She said, “the younger kids are normally put to bed early because they’re waiting for Santa Claus to come in . . . to open the gifts the next day” (lines 876-877). I asked about the

opening of the present the night before, and Figueroa said “some of them may choose to do it . . . Christmas Eve, but that [scene] in particular I think is more, was more of a creative license” (lines 905-906).

Figueroa described her experiences including the traditional midnight mass where the priest and parishioners “sing Christmas carols and it’s like a little more festive kind of a, a sermon” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 881-882). Despite her descriptions of midnight mass and the obvious religious connections with Christmas, nothing in the episode refers to church or religion, other than a quick “Happy Hanukah” to an older lady in one scene. The closest thing to Christmas carols was the *parranda* scene, but nothing religious appeared to be a part of the song. I suppose they did not want to offend anyone. Although, in my opinion, when you do that, you still offend people with such a notable absence.

Figueroa had input in the creation of this particular episode. Figueroa said “Miguel’s Wonderful Life” was meaningful to her because she became “very closely related to that episode in terms of developing the Puerto Rican angle” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 851-853). For example, she said, with regard to the caroling scene, that she had to tell people “what a parranda was, ‘cause everybody was calling it posada, and I’m like ‘No, Puerto Ricans don’t call it a posada’” (lines 851-854). She said she knew she greatly influenced the script for that show including the *parranda* song that was specifically written for the episode.

I asked Kahn if the inclusion of a variety of characters impacted how or where she was able to sell the program internationally. Kahn added, “I think the fact that it was a more diverse cast was a real plus in . . . some places” (lines 254-255), but she said what

was more important was the “strong characters and strong stories . . . [and] good writing” (lines 253-254). Kahn said, “The show just doesn’t look like every other show . . . and I think that’s a real plus” (lines 255-256). Kahn shared, “I think the buyers are really looking for [pause] how will this show appeal to my audience . . . are these stories that are going to resonate with them, are these characters that are going to resonate with them” (lines 259-262). Kahn added that if children are able to see “a *reflection* of themselves” in a television show:

that’s a great thing, and that *may* have factored into the decision, but . . . I don’t know, because the same is true with the buyer I was telling you about in France. She looked at this and she said, “You know, this doesn’t really look like our population, but in *fact*, there’s a message here that’s really important for the kids that are watching that show.” (lines 263-267, emphasis in original)

Kahn said the buyers “really are quite thoughtful in their decision, which we love” (lines 268-269). According to Kahn, “What’s great about *Maya & Miguel* [pause] is it’s a story that really . . . the themes of the program transcend all cultures” (lines 66-68).

Gender. The original theme song had a line that said “he leads with his head and she follows her heart.” This was changed for the second season to say “they make a great team as they each do their part” (see Appendix Q for the entire lyrics). I asked Figueroa about that change.

Yeah, there was a . . . message or complaint . . . from a parent that, uh, thought that one of the lyrics in the song, and I don’t remember it specifically, sounded very stereotypical . . . of a girl . . . so we took it back, and, and we took the input and . . . it was fixed. (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 813-816)

I was amazed at three things: that only one parent complained, that it would only take one parent to make such a change, and that the change was made. I asked her if it was only one parent. She replied, “It was maybe about a couple . . . It made a difference to us”

(lines 816-817). I expressed my surprise, and she added, “We were still in production. We could afford to do it [laugh] . . . Let’s be honest” (lines 817-818).

The idea for the show was inspired by a program with somewhat controversial cultural and gender characterizations, *I Love Lucy*.

Maya & Miguel: Lucy & Ricky? Figueroa said Deborah Forte wanted to create a type of *I Love Lucy* for children and “instead of it being a marriage,” it was about “Maya being the non-stereotypical . . . Latino little girl” and Miguel being a kind of “foil” -- “they needed to be together in order for them, for the whole thing to work . . . One brought something to the table, and the other brought something different and created a nice balance” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 530-532).

Figueroa said:

that’s how, uh, Deborah Forte came up with the idea of how Maya was going to be a role model, she was going to be a natural leader, and she was going to be the one with the ideas and, uh, rallying everybody up, and then . . . you know she’s the one who always gets everybody in trouble, but then you know, there would be Miguel kind of creating that balance of . . . “OK, um, alright, this idea has to be brought down a notch but, but let’s do it anyway because it’s going to be fun.” (lines 532-538)

Because of some concerns I heard expressed by others outside the study, I asked Subervi what he thought about the Lucy-Ricky basis of the program. Subervi replied that he had not noticed the resemblance to *I Love Lucy* until he “read something about it” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, line 265). He said that prompted him to think back through the episodes. Thinking of the “zany situations that the kids go through,” he said he came to the conclusion that it was a “Lucille Ball-type of mix-up and misunderstanding and at the end it all works out, but yep, that’s one of those. That was fun” (lines 266-269).

I also asked Figueroa for her own opinion about the Lucy-Ricky homage. She said:

Personally, I think . . . first of all, Lucy and, and Ricky is like one of the best things that could have happened to American TV many, many years ago, and it's a pity that, you know, the same struggles that Ricky went through and Lucy . . . to get into the business, etc. in a way, you know, one way or the other, new shows that have attempted to go into the mainstream talking about Latinos have *still* encountered it. That's the sad part. So, I think that, uh, whether this was an inspiration for Deborah to do something in . . . the 21st century, and that's what . . . that's what inspire her, kudos to her, kudos to her. (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 820-827, emphasis in original)

While she did not reference the *I Love Lucy* show, Kahn did address the use of similar humor. She said, “physical humor is very important,” and that “there's a lot of very funny sight gags” (L. Kahn, personal communication, March 27, 2008, line 312). According to Kahn, “the humor is universal humor, too” (line 323). When meeting with broadcasters, she will often describe “some sample storylines,” and “everybody just cracks up” (line 311).

Maya. Subervi commented that “more than once she reminded me of my daughter when she was that age” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 175-176). Gotthelf wrote, “My 8-year-old girl loves Maya for her spunk and tenacity. She is a great female role model who has a ‘ca[n] do’ attitude and functions as a leader” (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, lines 92-93).

Kahn saw a similarity to herself. She said, “I happen to be a very exuberant person, so I mean, I really identify with Maya” (lines 294-295). Kahn also identified with the children's interventions into others' lives. She said, “I love them trying to fix their grandmother up. Their grandmother is perfectly happy, but aren't we always meddling? I mean, I am always meddling” (lines 290-292).

Miguel. I asked Figueroa to tell me about the decisions behind making Miguel both athletic and artistic. She said, “I think it was just a matter of . . . discussions with the writers and how the, uh, storylines, um, unfold” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 540-542).

Rosa & Santiago. The decision to have Rosa and Santiago own a pet shop was made, according to Figueroa, because of research that showed children’s love of pets, so the inclusion of a pet store was made “to fulfill that particular . . . insight that we knew” about children (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 548). She said they knew that pets were “something very dear to little kids” (line 550). Figueroa continued, “So why not have a pet shop? They’re owners of their own pet shop and they happen to be . . . very successful, and living in American after . . . their parents migrated to, uh, this country” (lines 550-553). With regard to the portrayal of Rosa and Santiago, Figueroa said Forte “wanted to make it very positive” – she wanted to present an inspirational “image for Latinos” for them to see “themselves, or to aspire to see themselves, in those situations” (lines 553-555).

When asked about the representation of the mother, Subervi said, “Oh, she was a cool mother! You know, uh, easy going, didn’t seem to be very judgmental and punishing or harsh” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 169-170). He said the portrayal of Rosa and Santiago could be a “great lesson for parents, too. Add that to the equation – it was helping any parents who would see the program [pause] how to better deal with their creative and . . . adventure-dealing kids” (lines 170-173).

Abuela. Subervi described Abuela Elena as “cordial, cooking, sharing notes about the heritage from the home country” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 182-183). Figueroa identified with Abuela Elena, in particular:

She reminded me of my abuelita. I mean, that’s my, it was my very personal connection. I could see exactly the same way . . . if I did something wrong when I was growing up, she wouldn’t be screaming and yelling. She would raise the eyebrow and be saying, “You are in trouble . . . let’s see how we can figure *this* out.” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 559-563, emphasis in original)

Figueroa pointed out that her grandmother was not the only one to resemble Abuela Elena. “It was inspired of many other abuelitas that are the same way or at least that we see . . . in the Latino culture that I have lived” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 564-566). According to Figueroa, Abuela Elena “serves as the cultural bearer and teacher. She conveys the behavioral norms to be followed by the kids and, in many aspects, by the entire family” (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, lines 141-143). In this statement, I thought of Hall’s (1997) description of regulation as “moral governance by culture,” which I will discuss more later, and saw Abuela as the vehicle for some regulation efforts (p. 233).

I asked Figueroa which episode she thought shared the most information about Abuela Elena. She responded that the episode in which “Maya and Miguel just start pulling stuff from the trunk, and . . . that’s how they learn about Abuela” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 911-912). This episode was “La Nueva Cocinita.” Because of her response, I made a point to include this episode in my textual analysis.

Besides her impact on the development of the Christmas episode, Figueroa recalled how something she learned when launching a product for Univision impacted an

element of *Abuela* and *Maya & Miguel*. For this particular product, Univision had a partnership with Gateway computers. Figueroa said people told them,

“Listen, I don’t know anything about a computer, but I know I have to get a computer for my children because they need it for school. And you know what, I’m going to learn how to do e-mails and all that for my kid.” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 595-598)

According to Figueroa, that insight was pulled into the creation of *Abuela Elena* and the decision was made to have technology interspersed throughout the series as a literacy tool.

Figueroa saw another connection with the portrayal of *Elena’s* knowledge of technology. She said her own grandmother did not use computers, but “if she needed . . . for one of our relatives to know something very quickly, she knew that I could take my phone and text message” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 566-572).

Figueroa said there was a deliberate effort to have *Abuela Elena* using technology. She said that the “show has to be [pause] reflective of the current environment where computers” are used by “everybody, even if it’s just starting to do e-mail for the first time” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 588-589). She said, “we’re seeing a lot about” how “older Latinos” are “getting involved one way or the other – at least basic e-mail and are chatting . . . because of the influence of the little ones” (lines 589-592). Figueroa said they knew “it was necessary that” *Abuela Elena* be portrayed as knowing the basics about computers; “it will be a literacy element . . . that can be implemented into the show for the kids to do . . . homework or find information” (lines 599-602).

Similar to ANNA, Figueroa also pointed to the focus on food as another identification point with Abuela Elena – she said, with “every abuela in the Latino market . . . everything happens around the kitchen” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 573-574).

Figueroa also mentioned that she was a friend of the actress who voiced Abuela Elena, Lupe Ontiveras. She said she did not know if her preference for that character was because of her seeing her own grandmother in Elena, or her friendship with Ontiveras and the, “going back and forth between . . . reality and non-reality that you kind of, uh, get this . . . element of endearment with someone that you appreciate and love as a friend” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 576-578). She said, her attachment to Abuela Elena “was a combination of all those factors” (lines 578-579).

Paco. Figueroa said that *Paco* was used as a tool to repeat certain words several times within the show. She said, “we know from our educational experts that . . . if you want . . . a kid to pick up a word either in English [or] Spanish . . . it has to be repeated three times” (M. Figueroa, personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 625-627). Thus, *Paco* was a “vehicle” for introducing certain words while still being “entertaining and funny” (lines 628-629). Figueroa said:

I don’t want to call it [a] prop, but it’s a cute element for kids. I mean, we go back to, to pets. We go back to animals . . . it’s something that, uh, kids love. On top of that, the parrot *talks* to you. (lines 621-623, emphasis in original)

Figueroa added, “and he’s quite a character” (line 629). I asked her if the family pet had always been planned as a parrot. She replied, “yes, totally” (line 631).

Subervi also saw the connection to reaching children through a fun animal. He said, “by *Paco* repeating the word, being such a cool bird and fun bird, kids would

remember them, [pause] so that was great to have the parrot” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 178-180).

Tito. Figueroa said Tito was chosen to represent the newly immigrated, second-language learner. She said that while “Maya and Miguel reflect the U.S.-born Latinos of immigrant parents” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, line 606) who are “completely bilingual” (line 607) and who speak without an accent:

we wanted to portray the second language *learner* . . . that is coming to this country for the first time and he has an accent or . . . he stumbles upon some words because it’s not the . . . pronunciation that he’s used to in his native language, *Spanish*. (lines 609-612, emphasis in original)

Figueroa explained that they wanted Tito’s portrayal to discourage “any kind of barriers of *intimidation* to any kids that are watching the show” (lines 612-613, emphasis in original). They wanted the children to “see that, ‘Hey, you can make mistakes because you’re learning a *second* language, right? You’re already *good* at one language.’ . . . and that’s wonderful” (lines 612-615, emphasis in original). Figueroa added that certain advisors, including Subervi, said “we *must*, we *needed* to have a character like that [pause] in the show” (lines 617-618, emphasis in original).

Andy. According to Figueroa, the depiction of Andy was a “deliberate effort [by Forte] to expand the definition of a ‘diverse society’” (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, line 183). Figueroa characterized Andy in an e-mail as “fearless and loyal” (line 186). Figueroa wrote, “Andy loves sports, kinda-sorta likes girls, and hates bad vibes. He has a wicked sense of humor and laid back calm. He is a great athlete too!” (lines 186-188).

Subervi remembered the discussions undertaken by the advisory board as to the characterization of Andy. They knew they wanted a character with a disability but had to decide other issues such as:

whether or not he would be an Anglo kid or not, uh, whether he should have some other [pause] handicap, or just one, whether there should be someone else in addition to him with some other physical disability . . . if it would be a boy or a girl. [pause] I remember some e-mail exchanges about all those, all those questions. . . . They asked for our feedback on all of those. (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 223-228)

He said the producers had decided “it was a *given* that the handicap would not be an impediment. It would not be a victim handicap. It would be a, a survival, getting ahead no matter what, overcoming the handicap” (lines 231-234, emphasis in original).

Subervi said they also discussed how the other children would be shown reacting to Andy’s disability. He said, “I remember the first episode where we were asked, ‘well, how do the kids react to him?’ and we had some feedback on it, and it was . . . that the kids would, would not . . . shy away” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 234-236). Subervi added:

Yes, there were some pre-set . . . notions of how the kid would be and overall that he would overcome . . . any of those limitations, and that the kids would, um, bring him into the fold of their fun group from the very first episode . . . in which he was introduced. (lines 238-242)

Theo. Figueroa said the presence of Theo “is obviously for the . . . relationship of having a representation of . . . African Americans” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 763-764). She said, “Theo is . . . super intelligent. He is . . . the bookworm, but he . . . doesn’t want to be called bookworm [laugh]” (lines 764-766). Figueroa continued, “He’s the analyst, you know. Maya comes with an idea, and she gives it to Theo, and he realizes what are the . . . probabilities of being successful [laugh]

or not. . . . How cool can that be?!” (lines 766-769). Figueroa said, “so, yeah, that’s . . . the way that, uh, we wanted to portray an African American kid” (lines 769-770).

Figueroa also referred to some African neighbors of the Santoses – the Okries. Maya and Miguel “live in a very diverse . . . *building* . . . and it’s another way to introduce the African American culture into the fold in an entertaining way” (Figueroa, personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 771-772, emphasis in original). Figueroa said the Okries “talk about their food, they talk about their customs, they dress in a certain way” (lines 772-773). She also pointed out “the high respect . . . of Maya and Miguel towards them and . . . they even *babysit*” (lines 774-775, emphasis in original) for Maya and Miguel when the parents and grandmother were not available.

Chrissy. Figueroa had mentioned that Cubans and Dominicans have similar numbers in the census, so I asked what made them decide that Chrissy would be Dominican. Figueroa said that it was probably suggested by one of the animators (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 496-497). She also said that they “wanted to see the combination of . . . African American with Dominican” to make a “different mix-match” (lines 497-499). Prior to her comment, I had not considered that Chrissy was darker skinned because she was a mix of African American and Dominican. Figueroa explained that they wanted Chrissy to portray a “biracial, bicultural” character (line 633). Subervi thought the choice of heritage for Chrissy was appropriate and pointed to the typical presence of darker skinned Dominicans in New York.

Figueroa also mentioned the choice to have certain characters like Tito and Chrissy who have thicker accents. Figueroa said, “She also has an accent [pause] when

she speaks” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, line 634) because of her parents’ backgrounds and “what she has heard . . . at home” (lines 635-636).

Maggie. Figueroa said that Maggie was also created as a “bicultural, biracial” character. According to Figueroa, “Maggie is of Asian descent and also of . . . Anglo descent” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 648-649). In my viewing of the program, I thought both of her parents were Asian, so this was another surprise to me. Figueroa said the creation of two friends for Maya led to the *tres amigas* – “it was about the girls” (line 648).

Regulation: “Moral Governance by Culture”

While regulation was not one of the *circuit of culture* moments I focused on, Hall (1997) makes a good argument that could explain this program’s connection to the *circuit of culture*’s moment of regulation:

But what is education if it is not the process by which society inculcates its norms, standards and values -- in short, its “culture” -- into the next generation in the hope and expectation that, in this way, it will broadly guide, channel, influence and shape the actions and beliefs of future generations in line with the values and norms of its parents and the prevailing value-system of society? What is this if not regulation -- moral governance by culture? (p. 233)

This particular piece of culture, *Maya & Miguel*, was certainly influenced by larger entities outside of Scholastic Media, including PBS and U.S. governmental agencies. According to Dornfeld (1998), “the public broadcasting system still represents the only American institution devoted to producing and broadly distributing television and radio programs that receives significant funding from federal and state governments” (p. 6).

According to Richman, *Maya & Miguel* was actually already under development when they discovered that PBS had requested proposals for educational programs. The call for proposals seemed to match perfectly with the plans for the show. Richman said

they were among 30 producers who submitted a proposal. One of the criteria was to support English-language learners.

The producers wanted the characters to be positive role models for other bilingual/bicultural children watching the show and for them not to lose themselves in translation (B. Richman, personal communication – telephone, Dec. 9, 2005, lines 72-74). While *Dora the Explorer*, according to Richman, seems to be targeting English speakers with the aim of teaching Spanish, *Maya & Miguel* has targeted Spanish speakers to help them learn English. According to Figueroa (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006):

We wish ALL children could benefit from the moral values depicted in the show; and from the show's fundamental curriculum goals, which are: 1) To promote the value of a culturally diverse society; 2) To support English language learners through the presentation of language in a natural context with a special emphasis on vocabulary. (lines 103-107, emphasis in original)

Kahn said, the idea that “we live in a world where there's all different people from all different places and . . . there's all sorts of bridges we build with each other to get along” – this message is “really powerful, so I think it's great” (lines 381-384).

The goal of this program was to cultivate certain thoughts in children – and perhaps their parents. They – Scholastic, PBS, the Department of Education, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting – wanted to teach viewers language skills and encourage them to get along well with “others.” In my view, this would fall perfectly under Hall's (1997) description of regulation as “moral governance by culture” (p. 233).

The end. Sadly, to me, the show will not have any more episodes. When I expressed my dismay and surprise to Subervi, he said:

Well . . . here's something that we learn along the way. . . this is not unique of *Maya & Miguel* . . . There are other children's shows that have had a similar run . . . you have a producer, you get the show done, you release them, and that's it. And they go into re-runs, syndication, and unless someone else comes up with a . . . whole bunch of money and support for it – and it's expensive, it's a multi-million dollar enterprise – that's the end of the story. (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 403-410)

He continued, "It's not that it's the norm for a program to stay with the same format and then have years and years of . . . production . . . the money is not there for that" (line 421-423).

Linda Kahn still works at Scholastic. Mindy Figueroa is still considered the project director for *Maya & Miguel*, but she works only on a consultancy basis for Scholastic now. Beth Richman and Cheryl Gotthelf moved on to other companies once the series was wrapped. This suggests that future researchers who choose to investigate the production of a series must do so very early in the program's creation if they want access to the people involved in its development.

Dreams and the changing media landscape. I asked several of the Scholastic personnel where they would like *Maya & Miguel*, or Maya and Miguel, to go in the future. Subervi suggested, "start thinking about the high school version of it" (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, line 314). According to Subervi, "we have very few programs" that are "multicultural, much less, Latino-focused" that are geared for older children (lines 416-420). Subervi said a new program could:

Have Maya and Miguel . . . get into some school activity where they, they travel to different cultures. They won a big prize in their school . . . and now they have an exchange program where they're going to different countries and bringing kids of different countries [pause] to stay with them for a week or a month and then the adventures that go along with it . . . that'll reflect many of the realities of different kids and expose them to different cultures . . . They could have each of the kids go back to spend a summer with their grandparents, so that each of them would have a week where Maya and Miguel would go and visit and spend time with them, too. (lines 316-325)

Subervi then suggested creating a *Maya & Miguel* movie where “the whole family goes to a couple of places, they get into trouble [pause] for . . . cultural misunderstanding and . . . at the end they come out of it winners” (lines 327-330). He said they should start by going to Mexico and Puerto Rico. He described some of the cultural misunderstandings they could face:

They could have a lot of fun with the “ahora” and the “ahorita.” And they'll have lots and lots of people going to the movie . . . you know the difference between those two words? . . . The Mexican and the Puerto Rican? . . . They're exactly the opposite . . . for the Puerto Rican, “ahora” means now. “Ahorita” means later. To the Mexican, it's exactly the opposite. (lines 332-337)

Subervi said cultural and language misunderstandings could provide many storylines. He said there are plenty of words that are used differently in different Spanish speaking countries – “having the kids learn that and have fun with that would be great adventures” (line 346).

Subervi later described what that next show might look like. He said, “Well, it may not be *Maya & Miguel*, it may be *Pedro & Maria*, it may be, you know . . . *Joey & Sasha*, or whatever, that someone else will have to come up with” (personal communication – telephone, Nov. 27, 2007, lines 412-414).

Figueroa said, “The sky is the limit for *Maya & Miguel*” (personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, line 223). She added, “We hope all families care

about the show and its importance. Personally, I hope 10-15 years from now, I hear young adults talk about how this show changed their life in a positive way!” (lines 223-225).

The dreams Figueroa shared in her telephone interview were tied with actual efforts she is attempting. She said, it “will be up to us to continue refreshing and . . . making it relevant and fun for the kids because there’s so many different ways to integrate” the program with other things (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 399-400). She said they were currently looking for underwriters to help promote the program with a cooking angle. She said, “we’re going to continue into the diversity community element, but we’re adding the health and cooking, um, side of it and lifestyle, so that’s going to be something fun that we’re working on” (lines 405-407).

While Subervi’s dreams were grounded in traditional formats of television and film, Figueroa was concentrating on new media. Figueroa said, “the other thing, from a technology perspective, is the 2 and a half inch” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 407-408). Figueroa’s dream and goal is “to get *Maya & Miguel* . . . into the videos, into the, you know, into the PDAs, into the phones, etc. That, I mean, it’s fascinating, but that’s where this gets hard these days” (lines 408-410).

Later Figueroa said, “when you asked me what, if I have all the money in the world . . . where would I put it? It would be that, exactly that” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 751-753) – referring to the new technology of the day. She continued to describe her dream for *Maya & Miguel*:

download some kind of a game, viral game . . . that's the area. Anything that I can download into an iPod. Anything I can download into a PDA . . . but if I can, you know, download something and have the kids respond or text message back and continue building a dialogue that way . . . that would be my ideal situation [pause] maybe they would be sending me . . . their recipes the next week . . . by text messaging, who knows? (lines 753-759)

Figueroa spoke more about the changing media landscape. She said that today's children are "used to multi-tasking, they're used to seeing multiple, multiple sizes of screens" (lines 722-723). This was said in opposition to her own experience: "when I was growing up, it was only *one* screen . . . It was a *TV* screen . . . Or the silver screen when you went to the . . . movie theatre or to the drive in" (lines 724-726, emphasis in original). She said, "but I didn't grow up with . . . a cell phone that has 2 and a half . . . inch , uh, screen that I can download whatever I want to download or connect to the TV right there on the spot" (lines 726-728). Figueroa emphasized that "this is something that *we* have to accept that it's, it's *part* of it. I mean, we *can't* do *anything* to stop it" (lines 729-730, emphasis in original). She continued, "But then what is it that we do in order to control the *content* of it, that's a different story" (lines 730- 731, emphasis in original).

With regard to that content control, Figueroa said entities like PBS and Scholastic that are "making the effort to be different from . . . the garbage" that is being broadcast "for the little ones . . . is going to be . . . crucial" (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 733-736). Figueroa pointed out that "not everybody's thinking that way" (line 737). She said, "Everybody wants to make a quick buck;" therefore, their goals are to have a show become famous "so you can get the ratings up and get all the commercial behind it" (lines 738-740). While she said she was not familiar with the storylines of *Hannah Montana*, she did know that "everybody wants to have that" and that fame and high ratings are "how people measure . . . great success" (line 742).

Because of this, Figueroa presented the problem for future producers of educational programs: “how can we create programs that will have the same kind of *commercial* or, or phenomenon appeal, but that has a message that has . . . something that is going to impact the lives of little ones” (lines 745-748, emphasis in original).

Returning to another dream for the program that Figueroa had mentioned, I asked her to tell me more about the cooking theme she planned. Figueroa said, “PBS has an initiative that they just announced,” and her team sees a natural and fun connection with it “because *Maya & Miguel* has so many episodes about cooking” (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 412-414). Figueroa added that “cooking is becoming a trend that . . . is growing among little kids and parents . . . the kids . . . like to get around the, the kitchen and they like to get into the recipes” (lines 415-418). She also commented on the positive activity that such a promotion can inspire: “You know, cooking together and doing stuff together . . . it’s a very nice activity between parents and kids or grandparents . . . or even aunts and uncles to do [laugh]” (lines 418-420). Figueroa shared some of the projects the team has considered connecting to this initiative: “cooking demos, we have little kids competing and bringing their own recipes or . . . submitting them online . . . we don’t have a *concrete* idea, a solid idea yet . . . but I [would] like to find the next . . . celebrity kids chef” (lines 422-426, emphasis in original).

Figueroa continued to describe her plans and how they fit with the PBS initiative. She mentioned the creation of lesson plans, recipes, crafts, and fun foods (personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, lines 432-434). She also spoke of her thought process as to how to promote this new initiative. She is looking for ways to “take that to

the grassroots” and add it to “the existing events that we have like Día de los Niños” (lines 435-436). She said, by doing that, “we *refresh* our participation, and it makes it fun” (line 437, emphasis in original). She suggested having “little aprons” or “little chefs ware” and letting the children “do a little competition, or a little cooking demo or something and then we can get the . . . grown-up celebrity chefs . . . to select the winners. You know, that would be fun” (lines 437-441). She said they also plan to create recipe cards. Figueroa said one of her “number one priorities” is to find “someone to partner with us” to proceed with these ideas (line 452).

Kahn echoed Figueroa’s concentration on new media opportunities for the program. She mentioned that these “different distribution channels” open “new opportunities” (L. Kahn, personal communication – telephone, March 27, 2008, lines 212-213). Her other hopes for the future of the program were that it would go “anywhere it hasn’t been so far” and that she would “love to see the people who . . . bought the show pick it up again” once the renewal cycle came (lines 402-405).

Summary of Production Interviews

Through these interviews with current and former Scholastic employees and an advisor, I learned much about the process of producing and promoting a television show – specifically an educational, animated, children’s program. The participants shared the program’s goals with me, along with a description of their target audience of elementary school kids. They described some of what went into writing the scripts, getting the program on the air around the world, the connection with merchandising, and the efforts to promote the program and its messages of community and friendship. They also described the aim of presenting a wonderful family.

Through their descriptions of the goals, messages, and purposes of the program, I realized that regulation was, in fact, being attempted – not in a nefarious way, but they *were* trying to train or guide children’s moral conduct in order to encourage them to care about each other, to accept one another despite differences, and to appreciate their families.

Much discussion in these participant interviews involved culture, race, or ethnicity. The term diversity was used a number of times to describe the actors they sought, the goal for the show to “own” diversity in the marketplace, the positive research results with children in this area (e.g., more accepting of others after watching for a period of time), and the purposeful inclusion of diversity experts on the panel of advisors. While several team members emphasized that the show is for all children, the producers made special efforts to help English-language learners – a group that is typically an “other” within the United States. Through the use of Spanish and presentation of an Hispanic family, according to the production team, PBS had an increase in Hispanic viewers, which was of benefit to the network. The company had a bilingual writer, two bilingual educational advisors, and a number of bilingual/bicultural characters. From the production team to the portrayals on screen, these participants pointed to the multicultural environment created within this program.

Two of the production participants I interviewed were of Hispanic heritage, which led to them describing Hispanics or Latinos as “us.” Figueroa introduced a statement with “as a Latina” clarifying her position and why this show meant what it did to her (M. Figueroa, personal communication – e-mail, Sept. 15, 2006, lines 43-46). She also pointed out that the show was enjoyed by both “Latino and non-Latino kids” (M.

Figueroa, personal communication – telephone, Dec. 7, 2007, line 696). Figueroa also discussed the positive image that the show put forth for Latinos.

An “us/them” dichotomy could sometimes be heard in their descriptions of Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics, which seems only natural because both Figueroa and Subervi are from Puerto Rico. They both discussed particular terms that are used differently between Puerto Ricans and Mexicans (*parranda* vs. *posada*; *ahora* vs. *ahorita*). They mentioned the U.S. demographics as determining factors in how the characters were created, with Mexicans in the clear majority of Hispanics in the country (60-65%), but Figueroa also pointed to the desire for balance between the presentation of Mexican and Puerto Rican culture. Perhaps she was hoping to avoid the appearance of Puerto Rico or other Hispanic countries as “others” compared to Mexico.

There was also an “us/them” discussion of U.S.-born Hispanics versus those who immigrated. To present these “others,” they were portrayed with thicker accents and sometimes darker skin (i.e., Tito). Chrissy was also presented with a thick accent and darker skin, but according to Figueroa, she was supposed to have been born in the United States and simply was influenced by her parents’ thicker accents.

While they did not point to White people as “others,” two of the participants used the term Anglo to describe Andy and Maggie (biracial mix of Asian and Anglo), which I found interesting. Figueroa was the only one to discuss the African American portrayals of Theo and the Okries. She described the inclusion of information about the Okries’ food, customs, and entertainment. With Theo, his portrayal seemed more focused on his American-ness. His depiction was evidently more about presenting a particular picture of an African American child than about teaching his culture to viewers.

Several production team members shared their identifications with certain characters or situations. They saw similarities in their own families and sometimes with themselves in particular. They seemed to really enjoy the characters and the humor of the program and were pleased to have been involved in the project.

Through two of these interviews, I also learned that the new media landscape was of concern. Figueroa and Kahn both discussed the new opportunities and challenges opening up because of developments in technology. Figueroa described how her efforts were turning toward the smaller screens – how to reach children and offer them positive content for cell phones and small video players.

Summary of All Interviews

Based upon my interviews, I found that while the audience members do not always seem to recognize or understand the efforts of the production team, they appear to enjoy this program. They have chosen to watch it for various reasons. The mothers recognize some of the educational benefits for their children; the children enjoy the fun stories and characters. On the production side, the Scholastic personnel are pleased with their own involvement and in how the show has been received.

Consumption. Based on the audience interviews, I think perhaps consumption impacted consumption. It appears that the viewing of other programs may have influenced the choice to watch *Maya & Miguel*. HOLLY, MARSHALL, WILL, NIKI, CORRIE, and CHRIS all mentioned watching *Arthur*, which comes on immediately before *Maya & Miguel* in the local television market. Because of its placement in the line-up, *Maya & Miguel* may have picked up viewers from the programs airing before and/or after it.

For parents, having it tied to PBS signaled to them that the program was educational and safe. For the children, this was a network with which they were familiar and that they commonly viewed. Several children mentioned watching the PBS Kids Go! programs. They perhaps identified this program as one they would enjoy because of its network and time slot. On the other hand, one child identified PBS as too young for her (i.e., NIKI), though she still reported watching several of the programs and clearly did not realize she is at the heart of *Maya & Miguel's* 6- to 8-year-old target audience “sweet spot.”

A little bit of a chicken and egg question still exists for me as to whether the children consume the program because they identify with it, or they identify with characters because they happen to watch the show. This offers support for the non-linearity of the circuit of culture in that the moments do not necessarily happen in a particular order. I would guess the latter is true based on some of the interview answers about them watching PBS and that this program came on after *Arthur*, so they kept watching – at least, that is why they began to watch it.

As I asked each of the children what they could tell me about the program, it seemed to be typical that the children would gravitate toward the same gendered characters. Often they would go into more description of those characters. Boys and girls equally liked the program, so the producers' apparent efforts at gaining a balance of male and female-oriented activities has evidently been successful.

Figuroa described a balance that they sought related to culture, too, but based on the viewer interviews, I do not think it came through. None of the children picked up on Puerto Rico or the Dominican Republic. There was also no discussion of Andy's

ethnicity or culture. Several participants remembered a connection with Mexico and/or China. Overwhelmingly, the cultural characterizations within the program were not understood by the audience members as the producers most likely would have preferred.

Identification. Identification impacted production in at least one character: Abuela Elena. Mindy Figueroa shared how her identification with her grandmother and other abuelas in the Hispanic community influenced Elena's characterization and at least some storylines involving Abuela. Figueroa's identification with Puerto Rican culture also impacted the creation of at least one episode, "Miguel's Wonderful Life."

Physical activity was an aspect commonly mentioned by the children in their descriptions of certain characters, and it is apparent in each episode of *Maya & Miguel*. This was not emphasized in any of the interviews with the production team, but it seems to me to be a deliberate effort to encourage viewers to be active. The children I interviewed obviously picked up on the presence of sports based on their descriptions of Miguel and his friends, in particular. Soccer was clearly the sport most often mentioned by the children, but baseball, football, basketball, racing, and skateboarding were also listed by the viewers I interviewed. What is interesting is that they connected each of the boys on the program with sports but generally did not mention a sport or physical activity when describing the girls.

This clear recall of physical activity with boys but not girls was surprising to me because in one episode or another, each of the girls is shown playing soccer, dancing, jumping rope, and playing volleyball. Maya is also shown riding a bicycle. Why did the children not pick up on this? Or why did it not come to mind when they were describing the characters? Is it that we are programmed to think of boys connected to sports – much

like CORRIE's statement that playing soccer and winning trophies was "boy stuff" (personal communication – in person, May 24, 2006, line 94)?

While the children identified different characters as funny, all of the children mentioned humor as something that appealed to them. For several, it was the main reason they watched the program. Two parents also mentioned the appeal of humor within the program.

Child and adult participants recalled a number of aspects with regard to characters' appearances. It was fascinating to me that while skin color was rarely mentioned by the children or their parents, clothing and accessory colors were often described. This memory did not seem to be connected to gender because WILL recalled Rosa's pink shirt and RANJAN mentioned CHRISSY's skirts.

Defining diversity. Five interview participants mentioned diversity by name and a sixth by description. For one mother, it was the main reason for watching the program. She considered the program diverse because of the presence of other races and the leadership demonstrated by the major female character. Another mother said the differences in the characters appealed to her. She was happy for her son to watch a program with various races and disabilities.

The production team members discussed diversity as something they sought for the program and that certain broadcasters sought, as well. They mentioned wanting to teach children to appreciate diversity. One mentioned that *Maya & Miguel* "owned" diversity within the children's market. One also mentioned that Scholastic's research showed that children who viewed the program would have positive thoughts about

different people after watching. This team member appeared to define diversity by skin color and accent.

Production. In my interviews with the production team members, they described the process of creating the program, including finding funding, targeting an audience, conducting research, and setting goals. They discussed their relationship with PBS and the purposeful representation of various cultures and educational content on the program. They explained some of the reasoning behind the creation of each of the major characters and the general portrayals of family, friends, race, and gender. They delineated the promotion efforts behind the program including related product merchandising and the international distribution of the show itself. They discussed their dreams for the future of *Maya & Miguel* and how it may be impacted by the changing media landscape.

While the previous section examined the recall and opinions about the program by audience members and the production team, the following section will offer a look at the text itself through my eyes.

The Text

After much deliberation, I attempted to select episodes that would give each character a chance to be portrayed clearly. In other words, I tried to find an episode that featured each major character. I stopped my textual analysis when I felt I reached redundancy, which occurred after viewing and taking notes on 12 episodes. While the other episodes surely have varied storylines, the basic messages seem to have been captured in those used in this study (See Appendix J for a brief summary of each of the episodes analyzed).

As I analyze the episodes below, I will refer to “others,” to an “us/them” dichotomy, and to the power held by particular characters. I will also refer to stereotypes. It is important to remember that stereotyping is not necessarily bad. With regard to power in this particular text, I generally looked for whom the text presented as an authority, an owner, or decision-maker in a situation. Power can also be illustrated through one character’s greater knowledge compared to another. Because of these variations in the origin of power, those in power in the text are not necessarily in power in each episode. Theoretically, positions of power are typically related to race/ethnicity.

Setting the scene

Maya & Miguel presents an urban setting through the eyes of twin 10-year-olds of Hispanic heritage. Their lives revolve around their family, school, and extracurricular activities. The beginning of each episode involves a song (see Appendix Q for the lyrics) and a teaser with a visual introduction to each major character. While the show – and even these opening images – appears to center more around Maya, the song is sung by a male voice with other backup vocalists.

A large pink and blue, modified yin-yang symbol appears positioned above the earth. Most likely it is also supposed to resemble a twin embryo. Maya jumps out of the pink side and spins the symbol around until Miguel tumbles out of the blue side. They stand on top of the world and begin dancing what appears to be the tango.

The scene then transitions to Abuela’s apartment as Maya has pulled Miguel into the scene. They run around Abuela and Paco, and then Maya gives her grandmother a hug and kiss. Maya pulls Miguel across the hall to their own apartment living room where we see Santiago and Rosa dancing. Maya spins Miguel around so fast that he looks

blurry. Santiago then begins to play the guitar as Maya dances with her mother. Miguel plays the bongo drums, which Maya then hits a few times. Maya then pulls Miguel through another scene change that shows them rollerblading with Tito on the sidewalk. They are evidently playing roller hockey based on the stick held by Tito.

Maya suddenly rides a skateboard and begins blowing bubbles. Maggie and Chrissy appear on skateboards behind her. Maya then pulls Miguel into a scene on a soccer field. Andy and Theo appear. Andy is ready to play, but Theo is shown reading. Miguel scores a goal and his shoe lights up, much like Maya's ponytail holder does in the next scene as she has an idea. She gives him a high five to celebrate his goal.

The next scene begins in the pet shop as Maya has a big idea and the animals' cages open. She takes most of them out of their cages and puts them on leashes – including two cats, a rabbit, a turtle, a snake, and five dogs. Miguel has one dog on a leash. They take the animals out of the store and soon they are wrapped up back to back by all of the leashes. Their faces are encircled by a navy background and then covered by the show's logo.

This introduction to the show with the theme song aptly points to many of the major themes of the program and the goals expressed by the producers. The song (see Appendix Q) and images point to positive interactions between friends and family members, including those of different races. The images offer hints of the children's personalities, particularly of Maya as she pulls Miguel from scene to scene, Miguel's reaction to her idea in the pet store, and Theo shown reading. The family is portrayed as active, affectionate, and musical. The song points to the importance of friends and family, as well.

Representation of Culture, Race, and Ethnicity

As I analyzed these episodes of *Maya & Miguel*, I watched for the cultural presentation of the characters. I looked for examples of their way of life, their beliefs, their traditions, and what they value. Their culture, in my mind, includes their race, ethnicity, ways of interacting with others, as well as their language, clothing, and food. These cultural aspects of the program are examples of what I looked for in my analysis, though they are not the only topics I noticed. While I had certain topics in mind when I began, other patterns emerged organically.

Several races/ethnicities and countries of origin are present in the storylines of *Maya & Miguel*. Abuela, Rosa, and Tito are from Mexico. Santiago is from Puerto Rico. Chrissy has a Dominican heritage, while Maggie has a Chinese heritage. Theo is African American, and Andy is White and from Wisconsin. Other minor characters hail from different places. In their neighborhood, there are Jewish characters and people of African, Hispanic, and Italian descent. At school, their teachers are African American, Vietnamese, and White. Their coaches appear to be Hispanic and White.

Various cultural lessons are taught throughout the series. For example, we learn about the Puerto Rican custom of *parrandas* in “Miguel’s Wonderful Life.” We see chopsticks used by Maggie’s family in “After School.” We learn about Mexican wrestling in “A Rose is Still a Rose.” We hear names of native Mexican dishes in “La Nueva Cocinita.” We learn some ASL (American Sign Language) and the proper way to speak to deaf people in “Give me a Little Sign.” We learn about Puerto Rico’s landscape

in “The Pen Pal.” We learn about U.S. Thanksgiving customs, as well as some Puerto Rican dishes, in “The Perfect Thanksgiving⁷.”

Food. As ANNA mentioned in her interview, food is an important part of Hispanic culture. Therefore it was appropriate to see food as a central storyline element in a number of episodes. Food was involved in the storylines of “Give me a Little Sign,” “After School,” “Miguel’s Wonderful Life,” “La Nueva Cocinita,” “The Perfect Thanksgiving,” “The Pen Pal,” “Friends Forever?,” and “When Maya Met Andy.”

In “Give me a Little Sign,” Tito and Paco are shown helping Abuela make tamales. In “After School,” we see Maya and Miguel having an afternoon snack with Abuela. The choice of a snack of tacos and milk seems to point toward their ethnicity. In “Miguel’s Wonderful Life,” Maya treats Miguel to his favorite breakfast – the Mexican dish *huevos rancheros*. We also find out that Maya has talked her grandmother into making tamales.

Abuela is shown more as a cook in “Role Reversal.” She brings out desserts she made – one of which looks like flan and the other like rice pudding. The family sits around the table except for her. She stands there watching them eat.

Flan is featured again in “Soccer Mom,” as it was in “Role Reversal,” although this time the characters refer to it by name. The kids trick Santiago into taking their mom to a particular restaurant supposedly because Rosa has been working so hard – they actually want her to miss soccer practice. They won him over by saying, “Tio Ernesto said it was the best flan in town.” When Rosa runs off to soccer practice, she leaves behind her flan, which Santiago happily eats.

⁷ This episode was listed on the copy I received as “The Perfect Thanksgiving,” but online it is referred to as “The Best Thanksgiving Ever.”

In “La Nueva Cocinita,” like a stereotypical abuela, Elena tries to comfort her grandchildren with hot cocoa and food. The fact that Abuela Elena had a Mexican restaurant named “La Cocinita” with her late husband, Ernesto, points rather clearly to their heritage. Miguel reads the recipes from her book in Spanish and English. Not only are their names in Spanish, but the ingredients suggest their Mexican origin (e.g., corn, shrimp, coconut, lime). As the twins read the recipes to each other, Miguel’s mouth begins to water, his stomach begins to growl, and he is drawn with hearts in his eyes. The children are shown preparing and serving the food to customers. Most of the adults, including the parents, are shown eating the food. This episode and “The Perfect Thanksgiving” involved the biggest focus on food.

Because the story describes a Thanksgiving celebration, it is only natural for “The Perfect Thanksgiving” to involve food. The turkey was a key element in the plot. Rosa was prepared to make the perfect dinner, but her turkey order at the butcher’s came out wrong. He could either give her a live turkey or a frozen one – neither of which she had dealt with before. The frozen turkey caused much consternation as they attempted to make it thaw faster through baths, heat from the oven’s open door, and hairdryers. In the end, Tata (Santiago’s mother from Puerto Rico) fries the turkey. She also makes her “world famous” gravy. Miguel lists traditional U.S. dishes he wants to have in “The Perfect Thanksgiving,” including stuffing, cornbread, pumpkin pie, cranberry sauce, and yams, while his father suggests some traditional fare from Puerto Rico, including plantains, so that his mother will feel at home. The children also mention Halloween candy and are shown sharing their last piece left from that holiday.

While Hispanic culture is the most prominent culture featured on *Maya & Miguel*, several other cultures are represented through supporting characters. Some of the storylines in this textual analysis offer more cultural details about these groups than others. Across the series, too, there are certain cultures that are examined in more depth than others.

“White” culture. While there are lessons about what food, customs, and dress are historically associated with several different cultures (e.g., Mexican, Puerto Rican, Chinese, African), there is never a discussion of Andy’s cultural heritage. The erasure of White culture is not unique to *Maya & Miguel*, according to Dyer (1999):

Trying to think about the representation of whiteness as an ethnic category in mainstream film is difficult, partly because white power secures its dominance by seeming not to be anything in particular, but also because, when whiteness qua whiteness does come into focus, it is often revealed as emptiness, absence, denial or even a kind of death. (p. 457)

Andy tells Maya and Miguel that he moved there from Wisconsin, and a discerning ear can pick up that he is voiced by a Canadian. No other references are ever made to his life in Wisconsin other than to say he was on a baseball team there. We never see his parents, any siblings, or inside his home.

Another White child character was featured on an episode outside the present analysis, “The Bully and the Bunny.” The boy’s name is Jimmy McCorkle. The kids all thought he was a bully because of his size and strength. In the end, they discovered that he was just a kid like them who wanted to have friends and play. Like Andy, Jimmy (and his father) also were shown moving in across the street from the Santos family, and I believe they were also from the Midwest.

Other than Andy, there were a few other minor White characters in the episodes I analyzed for this study. They appear to include the detention teacher in “After School,” Miss Hasting, the deaf interpreter in “Give me a Little Sign,” the movie theatre usher in “A Little Culture,” a van driver who returns the children’s instruments in “The Perfect Thanksgiving,” the demanding Italian dance teacher in “Role Reversal,” the strict teacher who replaces Mr. Nguyen in “Miguel’s Wonderful Life,” and the “wacky” gym teacher, Mr. Dombrowski, in “Soccer Mom.” Interestingly, only two of those were important enough to be referred to by name in these episodes.

Two other White characters, though minor, are worth noting. In “Give me a Little Sign,” Tito has a crush on a girl in his class named Veronica. The second is a girl named Kylie, who is in Maya and Miguel’s class and, in an episode outside of this analysis, is a love interest of Miguel’s. Interestingly both girls have blond hair and blue eyes. In another episode, there is a reversal of this phenomenon – it is Andy, the blue-eyed White boy, who has a crush on Esperanza, a Hispanic girl. While their portrayals were positive, the appearances by these girls were extremely brief and did not offer many cultural clues about their heritage.

Keeping this in mind, there are so many varied stories that could have been touched on related to all of the White characters’ culture and background – did they have roots from Ireland, France, Poland, Germany, Russia, etc.? Only the dance teacher’s accent suggested that she was an Italian immigrant.

Perhaps if we had seen the inside of Andy’s home, that could have offered some cultural clues. Interestingly, storylines across the series take us briefly into the homes of

Theo and Chrissy and a little more into the home of Maggie, but never into the home of Andy.

“Asian” culture. In “After School,” we see Maggie’s home and family. She appears to be an only child, which lines up with Chinese customs. At dinner, Maggie and her parents are shown eating what appears to be rice out of bowls with chopsticks. At the beginning of “A Little Culture,” we see Maggie’s bedroom for about 20 seconds. The room décor includes Chinese lanterns hanging from the ceiling and bamboo in a planter on her nightstand. The room also includes plenty of generic feminine decorations, such as pink hearts.

In the episode “After School,” Maggie speaks to her teacher, Mr. Nguyen, about not putting the tardiness down in her permanent record. She brings up the reason of family honor, which seems to be culturally appropriate based on what I have seen and read. Admittedly, my knowledge of Asian American culture is mainly limited to what I have seen or heard in the media, so it is possible I am relying on an inaccurate stereotype.

Maggie also seems to fit the stereotype I have seen of an Asian American student as intelligent and driven. At 10-years-old, she has already mapped out her life through graduate school. As I watched Maggie pleading with Mr. Nguyen not to mar her perfect record, my thoughts were, “Is this a stereotypical portrayal of the Asian student?” On the other hand, rather than being unreasonable taskmasters as Asian parents are sometimes portrayed, Maggie’s parents are calm and understanding when they find out about her after-school detention.

Besides the illustration of Asian culture through Maggie and her family, two of the children’s teachers are also of Asian descent: Mr. Nguyen, mentioned above, and Ms.

Lim. Not much is shared about their culture. In one episode outside of the textual analysis, we learn that Mr. Nguyen owns a female parrot, which becomes a love interest for Paco. In “After School,” Mr. Nguyen is kind to Maggie, but he also holds firmly to the rules. It is interesting that this situation depicts one Asian American holding power over another in that he decides the punishment for her tardiness. It made me wonder if that was deliberately done to avoid the appearance of a racially influenced punishment.

Dominican culture. Chrissy is the major character with a Dominican background. Her parents also appear in at least one episode outside of the present analysis, in which her father has been told he will be transferred to Hong Kong. The majority of that episode, “Chrissy’s Big Move,” focuses on where Chrissy is headed rather than where she has been. In other words, this episode features Chinese culture rather than Dominican.

In the episode “Friends Forever?” the three girls set up a lemonade stand together. This episode is the only one that I know of with cultural information about Chrissy’s Dominican heritage. It is her “secret recipe” for lemonade that reveals to the viewers that Dominicans like limes in their lemonade in addition to lemons. Chrissy says, “Sometimes lemons like to be with limes and their best friend, sugar!” This idea is at first put down by Maggie, who asks, “Can’t we just have regular lemonade?” However, once she tastes it, Maggie agrees to keep the recipe and add a lime on her sign advertising their lemonade stand. This seems to send the message that we should not put down things because they are different – specifically, do not criticize other cultures’ food or drink without trying them.

In this episode, Chrissy is characterized as always late. Perhaps this echoes a laid-back-island influence where time is not treated so urgently as it is in the continental United States, in general.

African/African American culture. One of the children's teachers is African American, Mrs. Langley, as well as a substitute math teacher, Mr. Shue. There is also an African couple who live in the same building with Maya and Miguel, Greg and Isoka Okri. They dress in African-style clothing – yellow, red, and green patterned shirts. Isoka also wears a traditional looking hat. Greg and Isoka both have an accent, so the text seems to tell us that they are immigrants from Africa. The text shows them as respected community members. The Santosos leave Maya and Miguel in their care in one episode (“An Okri-Dokey Day”). They appear in a number of other episodes – for example, walking down the street in “The Pen Pal,” coming to “La Nueva Cocinita” to eat, and being the recipients of a *parranda* in “Miguel’s Wonderful Life.” Their appearance, however, in most of these is secondary to the main story. They are almost extras in a play. Their appearance in the text helps suggest an image of a diverse neighborhood.

Theo is the only African American student portrayed on *Maya & Miguel*. He wears what appears to be a basketball jersey with a white undershirt. This jersey appears to connect with some stereotypes of African Americans. Nothing else about him seems to fit with other mediated portraits of the African American male, however.

In “A Little Culture,” a connection is made between Theo’s African American culture and his African heritage. Theo leaves Maggie to go visit the exhibit on West Africa because he says his mother’s ancestors are from there. While viewing the exhibit, he imagines himself as Sundiata, the Lion King. In this episode, we also get a 10-second

peek into his bedroom. He has books on a shelf, a trophy, a large football-shaped mirror, a chest of drawers, and some clothes hanging neatly on pegs. Nothing unique to African American tradition seems to be evident.

In “Soccer Mom,” Theo again is portrayed as a smart boy. He brings flowers for Rosa that he grew using hydroponics to increase their color. He also learns to do a banana kick in soccer.

The text presents a very positive characterization of an African American boy – he is intelligent, knowledgeable about technology, and admired by his friends for his inventions and analytical mind. He is also presented as a good friend to Andy and Miguel and a good soccer player who desires to continue improving his game. He likes to read, and he is fascinated by science fiction.

During the dream sequence in “Miguel’s Wonderful Life” when Maya has disappeared from Miguel’s life, there is an interesting twist on the representation of Theo. He is now a troublemaker blowing spit balls at Miguel and saying, “Got ya, Santos!” Without Maya’s encouragement, Theo evidently decided to avoid teasing from the other boys by not pursuing his studies. Perhaps this is a deliberate message. Perhaps the production team wanted to suggest that this is the reason some African American youth are troubled – that if only they had someone to encourage them and to tell them that being smart is good, their lives would be different. Maybe this illustration could encourage both young viewers and their parents to think about how significantly their words can impact someone in the short or long run.

Puerto Rican culture. This territory’s culture is characterized by the text as almost synonymous with Mexican culture. Perhaps it is more difficult to distinguish between

them because of the mixture of these two cultures within the Santos family. Santiago is the major character who immigrated from Puerto Rico. His mother also makes an appearance when she visits the family in “The Perfect Thanksgiving.”

The text paints a portrait of Puerto Rican culture including *parrandas* for holiday entertainment, plantains for food, and an outdoor wonderland with rivers, the ocean, and a rain forest. Like Mexico, Puerto Rico is also shown to have kind grandmothers who know how to solve problems and who have their secret recipes memorized.

Mexican culture. Within the text, Mexican culture is portrayed through the main characters Abuela Elena, Rosa, Tito, and the twins. A number of this country’s cultural traditions are featured in the storylines, including tamales, piñatas, soccer, and dancing. Along with Puerto Rican culture, this is the most common cultural heritage shared through the text. This country’s culture will be discussed in further detail in the following section.

Dominant culture. The dominant, or at least most prominent, culture featured on *Maya & Miguel* is that of Hispanics. Because the central family on the series is comprised of Mexican and Puerto Rican immigrants, the major Hispanic groups whose culture is represented on the program are Mexican and Puerto Rican. While there are several White characters, including the major character Andy, this group is in a reversed position from usual – they are in the minority race. The text presents the binary opposition of the dominant group, Hispanics, and the “others” (White, African American, Asian, etc.).

Several episodes present an “us/other” dichotomy involving race or ethnicity. In “After School,” the Hispanic Santos family is central, but so is Maggie’s Asian American

family. Maggie's teacher is also Asian American, though his heritage is apparently Vietnamese based on his name (Nguyen), while Maggie's heritage is Chinese. In this episode, African Americans and Whites are simply in the background.

"Friends Forever?" does not portray racial differences as plainly as some other episodes, but there are at least two subtle stereotypical representations. Similar to the "After School" episode, Maggie is shown to be very intelligent having read *The Three Musketeers* 10 times, while Chrissy is represented as ditzy. When Maggie tells Chrissy she is Aramis, Chrissy is offended. Because she had not read the book, she did not recognize the character and thought Maggie was calling her a name.

On the topic of the book report, Maya is uncharacteristically passive. Maggie is the dominating character in this episode ("Friends Forever?"). She chose the book for their report, and she is the one who takes offense at Chrissy being late for their meeting. Chrissy's tardiness is evidently a pattern for her. Maya tries to reassure Maggie that Chrissy will be there soon, and Maggie responds, "She better be!"

When Chrissy shows up, Maggie is still upset. Chrissy asks Maggie to name one time she was late. Maggie immediately calls out, "Kindergarten!" Evidently Chrissy was late for her entrance in a school play and left Maggie alone on stage. Chrissy's rejoinder is that Maggie always tells her what to do. Are these stereotypes? The bossy but brilliant Asian girl and the lazy Dominican girl with no concept of time? The text definitely presents a binary opposition providing us with an intelligent, ambitious character and an unintelligent, silly character.

In addition to the tale of *las tres amigas* in "Friends Forever?", there is a parallel story about the boys' friendship. In this part of the episode, there is another subtle

stereotype of the Hispanic male who is good at soccer. Theo and Andy both want to try out for the new forward position on the soccer team and have individually asked Miguel, a star player on the team, to coach them.

There is another dichotomy of racial representation (black:white) shown with Andy and Theo. As each boy waits for Miguel, he spends his time differently. Theo is shown reading and is surrounded by about 15 books. When Miguel shows up, Theo tells him the mathematical probability of scoring a goal. His portrayal seems to break the norm for African American representations in the U.S. media, which often show them wearing saggy pants, getting arrested, and being more concerned with athletics than academics. Andy, on the other hand, is also shown reading, but he appears to be surrounded by magazines or comics. Perhaps this is another case of reversing the normal representation, just as the entire series does for Hispanics and Whites.

“Give me a Little Sign” also presents an “us/other” dichotomy not based on race against race, but levels within one particular ethnic group. Maya and Miguel are Hispanic and so is Tito, but because he has recently immigrated, Tito has a thicker accent. This portion of the text portrays the binary opposition of the U.S.-born Hispanic compared with the foreign-born Hispanic.

None of the other characters have placed Tito into the “other” category, but the text depicts Tito as if he feels like an “other.” He is afraid no one can understand his English pronunciations. Embarrassed about the way he says yellow, he flees his classroom and sulks in the hallway. It is another traditional “other” who comes to comfort him – Marco, a 7-year-old, Hispanic, deaf boy, who is new to the school. He jokes with Tito telling him he did not notice Tito’s accent.

Tito later has a nightmare about his pronunciation. By the end of the episode, after several encouraging messages from Abuela and Marco's mother and winning the contraption convention, Tito no longer seems to consider himself an "other." The text portrays him as a boy who goes from feeling powerless to powerful.

Thus, in "Give me a Little Sign," bilingual Hispanics are represented as people who may have trouble with an accent but who are really smart for knowing two languages. We also find out that Tito's last name is Chavez and Marco's last name is Rodriguez. Besides skin color and language, these last names also reflect their ethnicity.

The Hispanic culture, specifically Mexican, is also portrayed very prominently in "La Nueva Cocinita." Abuela is shown in a Mexican flamenco hat, and her Mexican restaurant and recipes (many in Spanish) are discussed by the twins. There are other races presented in the episode, including African, African American, Asian American, and White, but they have few spoken lines.

Like the episode "Friends Forever?", in "la Nueva Cocinita," it is the African American boy, Theo, who is portrayed as the brightest one of the group. He has invented a pen that also works as a digital camera, toothbrush, nail clipper, and gum dispenser. Once the photos are taken of Abuela's recipes in the children's spy operation, Theo organizes them by English and Spanish, cross-references them by food groups, and creates flyers promoting the restaurant. Even though he is represented positively, he is portrayed as subordinate to Maya and Miguel.

In major opposition to her characterizations mentioned earlier, Maggie is portrayed as somewhat ditzy in "La Nueva Cocinita." She is focused on being fashionable with her "rose petal" (pink) and lavender stop watches, but she forgets the

cue that someone is coming and asks the boys why they are coughing. She is also subordinate to Maya in this episode.

While Maya, Miguel, and their friends were transforming the Santos apartment into “La Nueva Cocinita,” Rosa and Santiago have been out dancing. This portrayal seems to fit with the stereotypical picture of Latin lovers. This depiction seems to say that they have vitality, a loving relationship, and are still young. It also suggests that they have some money to be able to afford nice clothes and leisure activities. The text also characterizes them as predictable; this is evidently a Sunday afternoon ritual for them.

While Mexican culture is the focus of “La Nueva Cocinita,” Puerto Rican culture is the dominant culture in “Miguel’s Wonderful Life.” Puerto Rican Christmas traditions are shared, including *parrandas* (caroling) and certain foods (e.g., plantains). There are some non-Hispanic friends who join in on the *parranda* and other non-Hispanic friends who are the recipients of a *parranda* (the Okries – an African couple). The main “other” represented in this episode is a Jewish neighbor Maya and Miguel see in the butcher shop. Miguel tells her “Happy Hanukah,” but that is all that is mentioned about her culture.

Also in “Miguel’s Wonderful Life,” there are brief portrayals of African American (Theo) and Asian American (Maggie) characters. Theo is shown to be intelligent, as in other episodes. His teacher, Mr. Nguyen, recognizes Theo for perfect grades throughout the semester. Maggie is shown as a fashion-conscious girl as she tells Chrissy that the popular color in Milan this season is apricot.

While Puerto Rican customs are prominently featured in “Miguel’s Wonderful Life,” Mexican culture is still evident in Maya’s choice to bring a piñata to school. It is also clear as Maya announces, “Tamales! My favorite!” to her grandmother.

This episode, “Miguel’s Wonderful Life,” also incorporates some U.S. cultural traditions. As the children hand out Christmas gifts in the neighborhood, Maya has Miguel dress as Santa while she dresses as an elf.

Besides a change in Theo’s life without Maya there in the dream sequence of “Miguel’s Wonderful Life,” we discover Tito has returned to Mexico because Maya was not there to help him feel at home. This referred back to another episode outside the current analysis, in which Tito had become overwhelmed with homesickness. In that episode, Maya led her friends and family in creating a Mexican fiesta for him (“Tito’s Mexican Vacation”). The text suggests that immigrants may have a difficult time adjusting to their new home, but that support from friends and family can make a difference.

In “Role Reversal,” the stereotypical Hispanic love of soccer is shown as Santiago dreams of being in Miguel’s shoes and getting to play soccer all day. Santiago mentions a particular soccer player who played for the Metro Stars. (This team is now called the New York Red Bulls). In this episode, the cafeteria worker is White, the dance teacher is Italian, and the school teacher is African American. While these are authority figures in the children’s lives, the text places them in the background. This points to the text’s presentation of Hispanic culture as the dominant one.

“Soccer Mom” also has numerous soccer references. In addition, it includes a contrasting picture of three coaches. Maya and Miguel’s first soccer coach is apparently

Hispanic, though he has no defining accent. My guess is based on his appearance – he has brown hair with a moustache and skin coloring similar to Maya and Miguel. After he moves away, Rosa takes over as coach. When the twins fire their mom, they hire Mr. Dombrowski. He is White and is portrayed as a “wacky” man who is not good with the kids. His image is that of a dumb jock who gives meaningless speeches, including clichés like “a chain is only as strong as its weakest link.”

In “Soccer Mom,” we also see Hispanic culture reflected in the Santosés’ apartment décor. The kitchen tiles are brown with a winding circular design. The magnets on their refrigerator include palm trees and fish. “The Pen Pal” also reveals Hispanic-type décor, including a Mexican-style rug, painting, and sun. In “After School” as well as other episodes outside this textual analysis, a binary opposition of home décor is illustrated in the home of Maggie, which is filled with Asian-inspired art and furniture. Unfortunately, we never get to see the inside of Andy’s home to be able to compare the décor.

U.S. and Puerto Rican cultures are contrasted in “The Pen Pal.” When Miguel is given a Puerto Rican pen pal in this episode, we learn more about Puerto Rican culture – both from the pen pal, Roman, and from Santiago, who becomes nostalgic for his homeland. We see scenes of the beach, sea, and rain forest of Puerto Rico. Miguel thinks his life in the United States sounds boring in comparison, so he aggrandizes his stories to Roman. This, of course, leads to trouble.

In “The Pen Pal,” Chrissy is again portrayed as a dumb girl. When Miguel describes a tall tale about his father wrestling a squid, Chrissy expresses admiration thinking it were a true story. When the other friends express their fantasies to be rock

stars and famous photographers and athletes, Chrissy says “I get to hang out with all you famous people.” This is similar to other episodes in which Chrissy appears enamored with pop culture. As opposed to the other children, her fantasy is to *know* someone famous rather than to be famous herself. In other episodes in the series, the text suggests that Chrissy’s family has some wealth and social standing. Her father’s work transfers him to Hong Kong (“Chrissy’s Big Move”), which suggests an upper-level position, and he is able to buy Chrissy some much coveted tickets to a pop concert for her birthday (“Surprise, Surprise”).

In previously described episodes, Maggie is presented as a stereotypical bright Asian student, but in “The Pen Pal,” Maggie’s fantasy is to be a rock star, “Maggie M.” This suggests a certain degree of assimilation into U.S. culture. Unfortunately, she cannot sing well. Terrifically out of tune, she sings, “Miguel Santos won a big place in my heart.” It is unclear whether the text is suggesting that Maggie has a crush on Miguel, or that she is just playing the part of a rock star singing about a sports hero. (“A Little Culture” seems to confirm the crush through Maggie’s dream of Miguel as her love interest in a Chinese play). The Hispanic-soccer connection emerges again because Miguel lied to his pen pal about being a soccer phenomenon. The real soccer “phenom” Freddie Adu is mentioned in the storyline.

In a brief nod to U.S. culture, in “The Perfect Thanksgiving,” Miguel tells his grandmother from Puerto Rico about U.S. traditions and the history of Thanksgiving. Maya has come up with a list of activities they must do to teach Tata about their traditions, including playing football in the park, watching football on television, having

a parade, and eating traditional foods. The delineation of U.S. traditions suggests Maya and Miguel's family has assimilated into U.S. culture.

What do these cultural representations mean? The text seems to tell us that not all Asian Americans are achievement driven – though it portrays that some are. Not only does the text show Maggie wanting to achieve perfection, but it also shows that she will be bossy to her friends to get there. It also shows possible assimilation into Western culture through her interest in fashion and her fantasy to be a rock star.

The text characterizes Dominicans as the opposing image of hard-working, intelligent Asians. Chrissy is presented as a girl who does not do her homework, who lies about having done it, and who has a pattern of being late. The text also stereotypes Mexicans and Puerto Ricans by associating these groups with soccer, food, and dancing. Puerto Ricans are also depicted as fun-loving and active people. African Americans are represented as smart people by both the portrayal of Theo and their teacher Mrs. Langley and substitute math teacher, Mr. Shue.

The text does not tell us much about “White” culture. Andy is shown as an active, friendly boy. He plays soccer and reads comic books. He has a positive attitude and is not presented as a victim with regard to his disability; instead, it has become a non-issue for him, and the text presents him doing almost everything his friends can do. The other White characters played minor roles. These supporting cast members in the analyzed episodes only seemed to tell us that there are many White people in the world in various jobs – from cafeteria workers to teachers.

Because of the overwhelming prominence of Hispanic characters, language, and culture, the text presents non-Hispanics as “others.” Whites, African Americans, and

Asians remain as “others” throughout the text. Even within the Hispanic group, Dominicans appear to be “others” because of Chrissy’s thicker accent, darker skin, and silly image.

Although there are a number of “others” in *Maya & Miguel*, the text tells the viewer that – even if you feel like an “other” – to remember that your accent or other things that may bother you are part of who you are. People will love you even if you are – or perhaps *because* you are – different. Finally, these episodes with racial dichotomies seem to say that you can enjoy other people’s cultural traditions (e.g., *parrandas*, Mexican food, limes in your lemonade) even if you are of another cultural heritage.

Educational Content

As mentioned in the interviews with the production team, there was a strong educational purpose behind the creation of *Maya & Miguel*. Those deliberate literacy elements included the presentation of language and technology.

Representation of language. Language is very closely connected to one’s culture, race, and ethnicity. As Richman said, “exposure to language is exposure to culture” (personal communication, Dec. 9, 2005, lines 14-15). *Maya & Miguel* is full of different languages, especially English and Spanish, and therefore full of cultural presentations. Many other cultural portrayals are described in the previous section, but this section will expand on the program’s cultural representations as specifically seen in the characters’ language use.

Spanish and English are used in each episode. In a few episodes, other languages appear, such as “A Little Culture,” which has a few words of Mandarin Chinese, and “Give me a Sign,” which features ASL. Because language skills were part of the

foundational reasons for the show, it makes sense that they would be apparent in each episode. Some episodes have more Spanish used than others. Some seem to focus more on English idioms than other episodes, such as being “in the dog house” or letting the “cat out of the bag” (“The Pen Pal”).

As the production team members mentioned, the language is tied closely to the storylines. In each episode, when Maya has her big idea of the show, she says “*Eso es!* That’s it!” Sometimes the “*Eso es!*” is said by itself, but often the translation is included. There are times when Maya also says she has an idea in Spanish: “*Tengo una idea.*”

In “A Rose is Still a Rose,” the words that are emphasized in English and Spanish are sun/*sol*, soil/*tierra*, and water/*agua*. In the episode, Maya says the English form of these words, while Paco, the parrot, repeats them in Spanish. When the pet shop floods, Paco repeats the word *agua* at least six times.

“Friends Forever?” centers around the friendship of Maya, Maggie, and Chrissy and the friendship of Miguel, Theo, and Andy. The girls refer to themselves as “*las tres amigas.*” The opposite of the female form of “friend,” *enemigas*, is shared through the storyline as the girls become angry with one another. The word for late, *tarde*, is also featured as the main reason for Chrissy and Maggie’s argument. Andy also apologizes to Miguel for being late. Please/*por favor* is also used in this episode, and the idiom “saved by the bell.” Because the girls are presenting *The Three Musketeers* as their book report, the phrase “*uno para todos, todos para uno*” is also used. In addition, Maya says “*cuidado*” when Chrissy squeezes a lime and the juice hits Maya in the face.

As mentioned previously, in “Give me a Little Sign,” ASL is featured, but Spanish and English are also present. The term sign language itself is repeated in Spanish

and English. The description of talking with hands is also said in Spanish and English. The words for fish, dog, bird, butterfly, tiger, and shoe are expressed in both English and ASL. The words paint, red, and yellow are given in ASL, English, and Spanish. The word “frisky” is defined in English but never translated.

Not only does this episode cover different languages, but it also addresses accents and deafness. A deaf character, Marco, appears in this episode. A deaf child would stereotypically be marginalized for his differences, but Marco is a central character in the story and is welcomed immediately by the main characters. He has power because he can speak a language that not all of the children know. Theo is portrayed with this same power because he knows “a little ASL.” Marco teaches a number of signs to Tito, which excites Tito in the end of the episode to realize he is becoming trilingual.

Marco comforts Tito with regard to his pronunciation troubles, particularly with B and D. Tito is afraid his English is too bad for anyone to understand him when he presents his invention at a school contest. Although he is a member of the dominant group in this series, Tito considers himself an “other” at the beginning of “Give me a Little Sign” because of his accent. He is extremely self-conscious. Tito even has a nightmare about “feesh” [fish]. What is especially interesting is that the talking fish in his dream has a thick Scottish accent – providing one more voice to the program.

Later, Tito notices that Abuela has an accent similar to himself when she asks him for that “jello” [yellow] cup. Tito says, “Abuelita, you talk just like me and everyone loves you!” She responds that she tries her best and that “My accent is part of who I am.” The highlight of the episode for Tito is that he is able to help Marco at the hardware store. Tito translates from Marco’s sign language into Spanish for the hardware store

employee. When Marco's mother comes in the store, she thanks Tito for helping. She tells Tito that it is great that he can speak both Spanish and English. The text presents Tito as powerful because of his language abilities. It also presents the binary opposition of the native English speaker to the non-native English speaker.

At the presentation of his invention, Tito was finally able to say yellow. In the last scene of the episode, Tito, Marco, and Veronica (a love interest for Tito) are on the stage at school after winning an award, and they say the word "friend" in all three languages. This episode especially seemed to send the message that learning other languages is desirable. By knowing another language, you can gain power and can be part of the "us" rather than "them."

In "La Nueva Cocinita," we hear several idioms: "let the cat out of the bag," "it's raining cats and dogs," "go to the dogs," and "doggie bag." With each of the references to cats and dogs, the twins have to comfort Paco that "it's just an expression!" We also hear a lot of Spanish words – at least 24 different words and phrases – perhaps more than any other episode. The words that were emphasized the most and shared in both languages were *hola/hi*, *encantadoras/magic*, *plato/plate*, *tazón/ bowl*, and *las recetas/recipes*. A number of Spanish words were used several times without an English translation, including *gracias*, *bueno*, *vamos*, and *adios*. There were also some English words that appeared to be repeated for educational purposes, including "restaurant," "team," and "umbrellas."

Spanish words often entered the conversations when describing native foods. In "Miguel's Wonderful Life," Maya makes Miguel's favorite breakfast, *huevos rancheros*. Later Maya exclaims, "*Tamales!* My favorite!" when she comes home to find Abuela

making some. Other Spanish words and phrases in this episode include *buenos dias*, *feliz navidad*, *parranda*, *noche buena*, *me gusta*, *por su puesto*, and *telefono*.

In “Role Reversal,” the phrase “run the store” is presented in both English and Spanish. The Spanish words in this episode do not seem to be as prominent as in other episodes – there are not as many different Spanish words, nor were they repeated as often as on other episodes. The words soccer/*fútbol* and work/*trabajar* were easy to catch. The English word “tired” and the phrase “not a dog” appeared to be translated into the Spanish equivalents, but I am not certain. There was also a Spanish phrase used by Rosa in the cafeteria line that I could not understand. *Gracias* and *de nada* were said in Spanish with no English translation.

In “Soccer Mom,” the Spanish phrase *por su puesto* (of course) is used. Again, words are emphasized in connection with the storyline. The words ball/*la pelota* and soccer/*fútbol* are used. *Adios* is also spoken and connected to “Later!” – a more informal English term for goodbye. Rosa also refers to Miguel as *bébé*. When Rosa becomes coach, she has the team members sing an introduction to each other (“Hello, my name is Maya, and I want to get to know you”). Rosa uses the Spanish term *canta* and tells the kids, “singing is good – it builds up your lungs.”

In “The Pen Pal,” several idioms are presented in English, including “in the dog house,” which the twins explain to Paco “just means he’s in trouble.” They also use the expression “to kill two birds with one stone” and “to let the cat out of the bag.” When Paco is alarmed about a cat being let out, they explain that the statement should not be taken literally. He asks, “no *gato*?” and they confirm that there is no cat. The phrase,

“*Como estas?*” is used in this episode by Roman in his e-mail to Miguel. In the end, Miguel apologizes in Spanish for lying to Roman: “*lo siento.*”

In the holiday episode “The Perfect Thanksgiving,” Santiago’s mother comes from Puerto Rico to visit. Her visit was announced when Rosa read a postcard from her in Spanish. The family refers to her as Tata. When they pick her up at the airport, Santiago exclaims, “*Mami!*” and she says, “*Mi jito!*” Santiago says, “*Buenos dias!*” when he wakes up the next morning. Paco is featured prominently in this episode singing two songs, one about bananas and the other about their misfortunes with live turkeys at the butcher shop sung to the tune of “Turkey in the Straw.” When the celebration is thwarted by a power outage, it is Tata who says “*Tengo una idea!*” and Maya comments, “So that’s where I get it!” Other phrases shared in both languages include, hello/*hola*, turkey/*los pavos*, football/*fútbol americano*, it’s mine/*es mio* and hug/*abrazos*. “Keys” appears to be said in Spanish as Abuela searches for hers. Touchdown appeared to be one of the English words taught in this episode as it was repeated several times.

Many sports terms were also shared in both languages on “When Maya Met Andy,” in which Maya and Miguel notice a new neighbor nearby. As the moving truck is unloaded, they list the sports equipment coming out in English and Spanish: bicycle, basketball, and soccer ball. Once it is obvious there is a child in the home, Maya suggests she and Miguel go to meet the new neighbor. Miguel asks in Spanish then in English, “Where am I going?” Maya asks Abuela in English then in Spanish, “Can we go over there?” Maya takes Andy some vitamins as a welcome gift because it is the best present she can come up with out of their grocery sacks – the term for vitamins is mentioned in both languages.

After they meet Andy, Maya suggests throwing a party/*fiesta* for him. These terms are repeated several times. Once the community center is decorated, Chrissy says, “This place looks great – *fantastico!*” Tito mentions Andy’s disability in both Spanish and English. The next morning, Maya tells Miguel to wake up in Spanish then in English. Miguel then requests to sleep five more minutes in English then in Spanish. Maya points out to Miguel that Andy “only has one arm” in English then in Spanish, and Miguel responds that “he’s fine” in Spanish then in English.

Andy is invited for a meal at Abuela’s apartment with Maya and Miguel. Abuela asks Maya in Spanish where the silverware is (that she removed to avoid offending Andy), and Maya responds in English. Other terms used in both languages include: Please/*por favor* and eye/*un ojo*. Additional phrases mentioned in both languages include “big heart” and “it’s a beautiful day.”

Santiago and four of the children go to a museum in the episode “A Little Culture.” This episode focuses more attention on the cultural heritage of Maggie and Theo, so not as much Spanish is used. While Maggie imagines herself in Ancient China, we hear *Ni hau*, meaning “hello” or “how are you?” in Mandarin Chinese. As Theo pictures himself in the Mali legend of the Lion King in the Ancient West Africa exhibit, we hear several Mali names: Sundiata, Dankaran, and Sassouma. With regard to Spanish, Maya says *vamos* to her friends at the theatre and *no me tiendes* to Miguel in the gift shop. Miguel’s response is to tell her to take deep breaths.

What do these language representations mean? The text tells us that knowing two or more languages is beneficial. In this text, those who are bilingual are admired (e.g.,

Tito is praised by Marco's mom). Being bilingual is also presented as normal, and those characters are certainly in the dominant group in the text.

Language training was evident throughout the episodes. While some consisted of more Spanish words and phrases than others, each episode had some Spanish. As the producers intended, the Spanish and English words that appeared to be taught in each episode were tied closely to the storylines. Either with a translation used within a conversation or by an object held or indicated by a character, I could deduce most of the Spanish words or phrases spoken. The text focused on Spanish and English, but other languages were also presented, including ASL and Mandarin Chinese.

The representation of languages in the text seems to propose that the use of Spanish and English is natural for Hispanic people. The text presents code switching between the two languages as normal. The text also clearly shows the cultural connection of language through many of the terms used, particularly in Spanish (e.g., terms of endearment, greetings, holiday related terms – *parrandas*, *noche buena*).

As Richman suggested, language and culture are closely intertwined. This also seems to echo Figueroa's description of the Santos family enjoying the best of both worlds. This is only possible by the knowledge of both languages. It also shows their desire to maintain ties with their heritage rather than cutting off connections and choosing to completely assimilate, as some immigrants do. This seems to be the current trend in U.S. society as opposed to 30 or 40 years ago when children's mouths were washed out with soap for speaking Spanish at school, as I learned from a previous study (personal communication, R. RODRIGUEZ⁸, June 20, 2006). Many of those children tried to eliminate their mother tongue and did not teach it to their children. I believe because of

⁸ Names in all capital letters have been changed to protect the identity of the informant.

their regrets with the loss of language and a feeling of being in limbo between two identities, there has been a shift to the current value placed on maintaining the first language (Spanish) in addition to learning a second (English). There also appears to have been a shift in English-speaking culture so that learning Spanish is now seen as a valuable skill and “cool,” as Figueroa and Kahn mentioned.

Representation of technology. The presentation of technology within the text is a theme that was described as a deliberate element by Figueroa (personal communication, Dec. 7, 2007). Often the children were shown using a computer to work with photos, do research, or send e-mail. Technology was particularly evident in “Friends Forever?,” “La Nueva Cocinita,” “Give me a Little Sign,” and “The Pen Pal.” The characters shown using technology the most were Maya, Miguel, and Theo. In addition, Rosa was shown using a cell phone, and Abuela discussed using the computer.

“Friends Forever?” opens with Maya sitting at the computer. She turns and talks to the audience about *las tres amigas*. While she speaks directly to the viewer, digital images of the three girlfriends flash onto the computer monitor.

Theo is the creator of a technological device in “La Nueva Cocinita” that can snap digital pictures, as well as serve as a pen, toothbrush, nail clipper, and gum dispenser. Once Theo and Maya sneak into Abuela’s apartment and take photos of the recipes in her book, Theo organizes the photos of the recipes in English and Spanish, cross references them, lists ingredients alphabetically, and makes flyers promoting the new restaurant.

In “Give me a Little Sign,” Maya imagines a remote-controlled soccer ball that could avoid the defense and score a goal. Miguel imagines a robot that could do his chores. Tito and Marco envision a “contraption” that can translate from ASL

demonstrated at one end to an English pronunciation at the other. Marco is also shown playing video games with the other children during this episode.

More computer skills are demonstrated in “The Pen Pal.” This time it is Miguel sitting at the family computer. The text offers the modern version of pen pals as Miguel communicates with Roman using the Internet. Miguel receives e-mails and digital photos of Roman in Puerto Rico. Though we do not see the photos coming out of his printer, Miguel evidently prints these pictures because he later shows them to his friends at school. Besides the scenes of Miguel sitting at the computer writing the e-mails, the viewer is also shown how Marco digitally altered his photographs placing himself in pictures to make his life appear more exciting.

What do these representations of technology mean? The text tells us that the Santos family and their friends exist in the modern world, which is filled with technological inventions available to them. In these episodes, technology is shown as commonplace. They have computers, digital cameras, Internet access, and cell phones. The text points to the use of these items and the access to them as part of normal life in the United States, and apparently in Puerto Rico. The presence of so many technological devices within their home also suggests some wealth.

As Figueroa mentioned, the presentation of these items in the text can also teach children about the uses of them. For example, you can use the Internet to research homework or to communicate with a pen pal in another country. You can take pictures with a digital camera. You can then use photo editing software to alter those pictures – this can be done to improve a photograph or to misrepresent something. You can print those pictures and show them to your friends. You can use a cell phone while someone

else uses the home phone. You can use a computer to organize information and to create flyers.

With regard to technology, the only opposition would be those who are shown using it on screen and those who are not. Maya and Miguel are often shown on their home computer. Theo and Abuela discuss their use of computers, but were not shown using one in these episodes. Theo was shown using his digital camera invention, however.

Although Maggie, Chrissy, and Andy are never shown using the computer and do not typically discuss technology like Theo or Abuela, it is not foreign to them. They never discuss a *lack* of technology. There are no images of a family or particular child suffering without technology. As a viewer, I would assume that if I could look around Andy, Maggie, and Chrissy's homes some more, I would find a computer.

While Chrissy and Andy are not portrayed as star students, they do not appear to symbolize the famed "knowledge gap" coming from the "digital divide" (Bucy & Newhagen, 2004). Also, with relation to the digital divide, there did not appear to be any racially divided differences in access to technology. In fact, there was more of a reversal in the portrayal of having the African American character use and discuss technology much more than the White character.

Representation of Age

While my first thought about studying the representation of age was to examine the portrayal of Abuela Elena, I realized that the depiction of each generation was worth analyzing. While the majority of the analysis may focus on Abuela, the following section

will attempt to analyze the representation of children, parents, and grandparents in *Maya & Miguel*.

In addition to Abuela Elena, there are several other older adults who make appearances in various episodes throughout the series. Older adults who appear briefly as supporting cast members include Señor Obregon (the butcher), a Jewish female neighbor, the Italian dance teacher, and Señor Felipe (the mailman). Another of those is Santiago's mother, referred to as Tata, who appears only in "The Perfect Thanksgiving."

There is a binary opposition between young and old. The text features the children more prominently than the adults, which points to the dominance of the young as represented in the text. There were several episodes in which there was minimal adult presence. These included "The Pen Pal" and "When Maya Met Andy."

There is also a difference in the number of appearances of even the major adult characters. Abuela appears in more episodes in this sample than Rosa, but the same number as Santiago. This is curious when considering the interview participants' lack of familiarity with the two parents. Most likely because of her culture and certainly because of where she lives (across the hall), the grandmother appears to be in contact with the children quite often – perhaps more than their parents. According to personal acquaintances, it is typical within Hispanic families to have a grandmother closely involved, especially with the care of the children.

When adults appear in an episode, the text clearly defines them as the authority figures. They are characterized as parents who give orders to the kids to go buy groceries or clean the house; they are pictured as teachers who determine the children's rewards and punishments; they are presented as coaches who demand their players to run laps,

drills, and certain plays and determine the positions played by the team members. With a few exceptions, the adults generally have more power than the children.

In my mind, the parents, Santiago and Rosa, are important characters, but they are presented less often as the focus of a story than the child characters and Abuela. They are certainly secondary. Unlike some of the interview participants, however, I do not see the parents as trivial. I believe the text has emphasized the children because the stories are told through their eyes. They are self-absorbed as most children are – few children are aware of what their parents do during the day and of the challenges they face. This is the same as how the text presents Maya and Miguel and their friends, but I do not think that undermines the parents' authority or importance within this fictional family. The text subtly illustrates that the parents' efforts are the reason Maya and Miguel have food to eat and clothes to wear. The concerning aspect to me is that when the children face troubles they depend on each other or they look to their grandmother. Thus, the text tells children that they can resolve most problems on their own rather than seeking their parents' wisdom and advice. For wisdom and advice, the text says, go to your grandmother. As mentioned above, this may be socially acceptable and expected within the Hispanic community based on a few conversations I have had outside of this study.

Examples of age portrayals. In "A Rose is Still a Rose," Maya and Miguel notice Abuela singing and talking to herself. The viewer is left to wonder if she has senility issues. They then discover she is actually crooning over her roses. Abuela is the gardener of the family, and in this episode, that theme of gardening is tied to raising children. Abuela tells Maya, "Flowers need lots of love and attention just like children." This is the only episode I know of in which Abuela leaves town by herself. This depiction seems to

break away from the stereotype of older adults staying at home and lacking the independence to travel by themselves.

Adults are represented as wise and understanding in this episode. Even though Maya has ruined Abuela's prize rose and damaged many others, Abuela forgives Maya and asks her granddaughter to watch her roses when she has to leave again in a few weeks. Abuela also helps Maya learn the lesson that roses "require patience – that's very important." A binary opposition is illustrated here in that the young (Maya) are impatient, while the old (Abuela) are patient. The text depicts the young as destructive, while the old are edifying. Both, however, are well-intentioned.

In the same episode, "A Rose is Still a Rose," Santiago sees Miguel imitating some wrestling moves he saw on television. Santiago encourages his son and tells him he is pleased with him. He suggests he should take up wrestling to learn discipline. Miguel follows his father's advice and approaches Señor Lopez, a former well-known wrestler who has since become a baker, about teaching him wrestling. Señor Lopez tells Miguel he must learn the basics before he can go on to the glamorous, exciting wrestling he has seen on television. Señor Lopez also encourages Miguel that he is "strong and smart and therefore could be a champion."

As opposed to the adults in this episode, the children are presented as impatient. Chrissy mentions the fifth grade rat race at the beginning of the episode. Miguel thought Señor Lopez would immediately teach him half-Nelsons and other fancy wrestling moves, and Maya thought the roses would grow right away. The twins come home discouraged at the end of the day and commiserate asking, "Why is it taking so long?" They do not even take the time to actually listen to each other. In the end, however, they

seem to learn to be patient – and they encourage each other with the phrase, “one bucket at a time.”

The adults in this episode are characterized as having power. The text portrays the situation between Señor Lopez and Miguel as one of master and student, as Miguel has sought out this former wrestler’s advice. In a scene reminiscent of *The Karate Kid*, to learn the skills he wants, Miguel must follow Señor Lopez’s instructions, which involve baking rather than wrestling. In this episode, Abuela also has the power over Maya. She is the one who allows Maya to take care of her roses and tries to share her knowledge of how to do that best. Santiago is shown as upset with the girls for flooding the pet shop and has each of the children help clean it up.

In “After School,” Maggie has to serve a detention for coming to class late and then arguing with the teacher about giving her a tardy that would spoil her perfect record. Mr. Nguyen clearly has power over Maggie in that he disciplines her with an “after school.” She is afraid to tell her parents, but her mother notices that she is picking at her food and asks her what is wrong. Her mother was also calm and patient when Maggie realized she was late that morning. It was young Maggie who panicked, while her mother tried to tell her it was OK. Later when Maggie flees school too scared to attend her detention, she comes to Maya and Miguel’s home ready to change her name and run away to Fiji. Abuela Elena tells Maggie that she can tell her anything and comforts her that she, too, once had to stay after school. When Maggie questions Abuela, “But you’re so perfect!” Abuela corrects her and says, “Nobody’s perfect” and that it is simply important to learn from your mistakes. Maggie’s mother reiterates this theme when she points out Maggie’s first attempt at fashion design. She says, “It wasn’t perfect, but you

didn't quit, did you?" With regard to age, it is also interesting to note that Maggie's mother appears to be older than Maya's mother. She is drawn with wrinkles around her eyes.

In this episode, the young (Maggie) are shown to panic, while the adults (Abuela, Maggie's parents, Mr. Nguyen, and the after school teacher) are represented as calm, understanding, and patient. The young (Maggie and Maya) think they are or should be perfect, while the adults (Abuela, Maggie's parents, and Mr. Nguyen) do not expect perfection.

In "Friends Forever?" the children are shown to be impetuous. When they get upset, they return each other's things in a huff and ignore one another. Maggie says snippy things, like "Well! Finally!" when Chrissy arrives late. In the end, they apologize and learn that "whenever you're angry, it's good to remember why you were friends in the first place."

The only adult in "Friends Forever?" is the boys' soccer coach. He is represented as a kind man who tells Miguel, "You are a natural!" The text depicts the coach in a position of power because it is up to him to select the player for the team's open "forward" position.

In "Give me a Little Sign," Abuela is portrayed as a kind adult as she comforts Tito about his accent. She encourages him that he should do his best and that an accent is part of who you are. The mother of Marco, the deaf child featured in this program, is also characterized as kind and encouraging. She praises Tito and his ability to speak both Spanish and English. Several of the adults (Marco's mother, Ms. Lim – the teacher, and

Miss Hasting – the interpreter) in this episode help teach the children how to treat deaf people.

The children in this episode are depicted as thoughtful. All of the friends handle Marco's deafness well. They try to learn how to speak with him through ASL. Marco also encourages Tito about his accent. If I saw a real child show this much concern for his friend, I would be very impressed with his compassion and would consider him to be quite mature. Tito is also shown to have a love interest, Veronica, which seems emotionally advanced for a 7-year-old boy.

The children's teacher holds the power of selecting the winning inventions in the contraption convention. Marco's mom also holds power in that she knows ASL and how the children should communicate best with her son. She empowers Tito when she tells him how great it is that he speaks more than one language.

The old are characterized as nostalgic in "La Nueva Cocinita." When the twins come to visit her, Abuela answers the door dressed up in some of her old accessories – a lavender feather boa and a purple flamenco hat with pom-pons – evidently trying to relive some memories. She tells Maya and Miguel these clothing items used to catch the eyes of young men – they "attracted a second look way back when." She invites them in and explains that she was "sorting through my trunk of treasures." When Maya and Miguel request that Abuela pull out her recipe book and cook some of the recipes from *La Cocinita*, Abuela Elena and Abuelo Ernesto's old restaurant, Elena says they are just for memories now because she cooked them together as a team with Ernesto. This is the only episode I know of that discusses the deceased grandfather.

Abuela holds power over the children in this instance because it is her recipe book, and she decides to keep it from them. Abuela tells them stories of the restaurant and how she and Ernesto would cook for each other and taste each other's recipes. She said, "Every night was nearly a disaster." Her memories come alive, but, interestingly, they are shown in sepia to match the photos from the trunk.

Later, when the children try to stall Abuela while they secretly copy her recipes, she quickly assembles the model plane they expected would take her much longer. She tells Tito, "Not bad for an abuela, eh?" This is another bit of evidence of her power over the children and how her depiction flies against stereotypes of older women. She has skills beyond their expectations.

Maya and Miguel's parents are represented as young and vibrant in this episode in that they are pictured dressed up to go dancing. They are somewhat sidelined, though, because of their brief appearance and powerless roles in this episode. Middle-aged adults are certainly not the dominant group in this piece of the text.

In this episode, the young are shown as thoughtful and eager to cheer up the neighbors. Miguel also appears wise as he reminds Maya that they are not supposed to use the stove. The young are shown as impatient. For example, Maya dumps ingredients into a bowl for one recipe that evidently becomes too complicated for her. The young are also depicted as naïve, in that they thought they could control Abuela and that they could set up a restaurant without any trouble.

Abuela is presented as nostalgic in the beginning with her clothing, pictures, and discussion of her favorite movie, *Dancing in the Rain*. She is hesitant to cook the recipes without her husband, but in the end, she steps in, gets the children organized, and gets the

cooking on track. This shows Abuela's power again, in that she is the one who can manage the children and get things running correctly in the kitchen. At the end, Abuela tells Maya and Miguel that "maybe these recipes don't belong in the trunk" and offers to give them a cooking lesson the next day. Both the young and old seem to learn something from each other in this episode.

In "Miguel's Wonderful Life," adults are shown as wanting to please the children. Abuela works hard to make tamales for Maya. Santiago asks Maya to research what Miguel wants for Christmas. Maya's father delegates a task to her, which places her in a position of power – although she would be beneath him in rank. Both young and old are shown to be impacted by other people – that their lives could be different based on how others treated them. For example, Theo performs well academically when Maya is there to encourage him. In Miguel's alternate dream world without Maya, Theo is a problem student. Even adults are shown to be affected by the treatment of children. For example, Maya brings a gift for Mr. Nguyen to show him the class appreciates him, but in Miguel's dream, Mr. Nguyen quits to become a realtor because he felt unappreciated.

Rosa and Santiago are portrayed as hardworking but ignorant of what their children want (i.e., they give Miguel underwear and socks for Christmas without Maya there to advise them). Maya is pictured as powerful in that she alone knows what Miguel wants for Christmas. Santiago is shown in a powerful position in the scene where Maya asks him permission to do the *parranda*.

In "Role Reversal," young and old alike think that the other group has an easier life. The parents think the kids play all day and the children think their parents watch television, eat bonbons, and play with the animals at the pet store. This brings about the

role reversal for a day, along with a reversal of power, which ends with understanding and appreciation for each other. Abuela, unfortunately, is left out of the main activity. Maya volunteers her to be their chaperone instead. Elena is presented in a servile role – she is shown de-linting Santiago of llama hair, serving dessert, and watching over the children. Although she would be in charge, or in power, over the children, she appears subordinate here.

When Santiago has switched places with Miguel and is ready to enjoy soccer practice, he tells Miguel's friends that he used to be called the Tornado. In a rare show of disrespect to an elder on the program, Theo replies, "Why? Because you sounded like one?" referring to his panting.

Other adults in the episode fulfill minor roles as authority figures (dance teacher, cafeteria worker, classroom teacher). The two teachers are represented in the text as having power over their students; the cafeteria worker has power in that she determines what the children have for lunch. The dance teacher is characterized as demanding, and the classroom teacher, Mrs. Langley, is shown getting upset with Santiago for making paper airplanes. Interestingly, no coach is shown at the boys' soccer practice.

Another interesting description of the role of adults vs. children comes in a conversation between Abuela and Tito. She tells him, "all grownups help with homework when asked to." This represents adults as having power but also the potential to empower children.

In the opening monologue of the "Soccer Mom," Miguel says that moms can do anything, that his mother helps with school projects, and that she never loses her cool. Maya also tells her that she is the best cook, that she takes good care of her family, and

that she does a good job at the pet store. This presents the stereotype of their mother as “superwoman.” While the images of Rosa, Santiago, and the original soccer coach are positive, they are still represented in the text in opposition to the children.

The soccer coach is pictured as cool and talented in that he has been recruited by the LA Galaxy soccer team. He also takes the team out for pizza. Strangely, there are no other adults present at the restaurant. This coach is portrayed in a power position. He makes the rules, and he decides that he will leave the team for a new job.

The fathers of the children are described as busy – none of them have time to take over as the team’s soccer coach. This seems to fit the stereotype of the busy, important man, who is less available for his children than their mother is. Rosa takes over as coach and is depicted as an embarrassment to her children; however, the other children think she is cool. Parents embarrassing their children is rather stereotypical, but the presentation of Rosa, a mom and last-minute fill-in for the position, as an enthusiastic coach who knows what she is doing is unexpected. She is represented in the text as a powerful person in that she is the coach – she decides what they will do at soccer practice. She leads the children through encouragement by telling them “nice job,” “great move,” and “I believe in you.” She also appears to be a mother who does not realize how embarrassing some of her actions are for her children. She is portrayed as completely ignorant of Maya and Miguel’s discomfort and self-consciousness until they “fire” her, and she tells them that she understands because she remembers how it felt being a kid.

Rosa is also characterized as a wise and calm adult when she figures out her children are firing her from the coaching position. When they try to fire Mr. Dombrowski and rehire Rosa, she wisely tells them no and helps them see that they need to live with

their decisions. As opposed to the huffiness present when the children become angry with each other in “Friends Forever?”, Rosa remains supportive of her children and attends their soccer game.

There are exceptions to the representations of the powerful adult in “Soccer Mom.” After Rosa becomes the soccer coach of Maya and Miguel’s team, the twins fire her. In the same episode, the twins manage to manipulate their father into taking their mother out for lunch, which was part of a scheme to make her forget to come to soccer practice. There is also a binary opposition presented between Rosa and Mr. Dombrowski. Because of his ignorance of the game, Mr. Dombrowski does not appear to be an empowered adult like Rosa does. He does not have the children’s respect and does not know how to lead them to victory.

One of Maya and Miguel’s other schemes against Rosa involved a foot massager that came with some assembly required. A binary opposition is presented showing Rosa as unable to put the machine together after hours of effort, while Abuela Elena walks in and finishes it within seconds. Just as in “La Nueva Cocinita,” Abuela is pictured as being good with mechanical things. When Rosa realizes she is supposed to be at soccer practice, Abuela sits down and uses the massager herself while she watches television.

With the depiction of Mr. Dombrowski, this episode has the first real negative adult portrayal and a rare display of disrespect for an adult demonstrated by the children. Mr. Dombrowski is described by Miguel as “wacky.” He gives a goofy speech to the team, walks around with a broken shoe, bounces the soccer ball like a basketball, ruins the ball, and hits someone on the head when he finally kicks it. He appears as a

stereotypical coach with a whistle, a yellow hooded sweatshirt, red shorts, a beer belly, and a blond flat top.

In this episode, the other middle-aged adult, Santiago, is shown to be hardworking – he is too busy to coach the team – but he is also easily manipulated by the children in their scheme to delay Rosa. The children, who lured him with flan, are portrayed as fun-loving but also conniving as they try to figure out a way to get rid of their mom as the soccer coach. They appear to have power over him in this instance.

In “The Pen Pal,” the older adult role is filled by the Puerto Rican pen pal’s grandmother, Mrs. Ramos. Abuela Elena does not appear. Mrs. Ramos is depicted as quite skeptical of Maya and Miguel’s stories and yet she remains quiet. The adults seem to be presented as “others” in this part of text. They are not central to the story and are not sought out for advice.

The children are portrayed as encouraging. Miguel’s friends try to help him think of exciting things he has done that he could share with his pen pal. They are also presented as creative as they come up with alternate personas for themselves, except for Chrissy, who decides simply to be a fan of all the other “celebrities.”

The children, specifically Miguel, are also shown to be helpful. Miguel helps his mother in the kitchen and both parents in the pet shop. The children are also represented as naïve in that they think their costumes will convince people that they are famous.

After dinner, the adults drink coffee while the children have orange juice. This is the only difference in food or beverage consumption between adults and children within these episodes. This seems to suggest that the children and adults are not on the same level. When the truth is revealed that both Miguel and Roman lied to each other, it is

Santiago who takes charge. He doles out the discipline to both boys – they are required to clean the animal cages in the pet shop.

In “The Perfect Thanksgiving,” older adults are shown as wise – specifically Abuela and Tata who both have their recipes memorized. The female adults pick out the food at the market, including tomatoes and bananas. They are not shown to be all-knowing, however, as Rosa reveals that this will be her first time to cook a frozen turkey. Perhaps this points to a difference in the text toward middle-aged adults compared to older adults, because the two grandmothers *are* characterized as experienced and wise.

When driving the children to track down their lost instruments, Abuela surprisingly dons dark, wrap-around sunglasses and driving gloves before she starts the van; however, it is quickly apparent that she is not going fast because a bicycle passes the van. This depiction fits the normal power structure of adults having the power to drive, which children do not have. It also breaks stereotypes in her choice of accessories, which suggested she would be a speedy driver.

A connection between the young and the old occurs when Tata has an idea to solve the problem of the frozen turkey. She says “*Tengo una idea*” just like her granddaughter. Maya identifies with her grandmother and says, “So that’s where I get it!”

Later, the wisdom of the old is presented as Tata points out the most important part of the holiday. Tata tells them, “I am so upset,” because they were working too hard trying to make the holiday perfect. She explained that no matter what, it was perfect because she was with her family.

Abuela and Santiago hold power positions in this episode because of their driving capabilities. Abuela drives the children to the community center. Santiago drives his

immediate family to the airport to pick up his mother. Santiago also appears to have power because, in the park, Maya begs her father to continue the football game even though it has begun to rain. After these two instances, Santiago moves to the sidelines. He falls asleep while the women watch football and the children try to thaw the turkey. He is also shown as powerless with regard to the electricity problem.

Young and old are represented as powerful. Maya and Tata both have ideas and when they are expressed, the text shows the other characters immediately follow. Maya's idea is to have a very special celebration in honor of Tata, while Tata's idea is to fry the frozen turkey.

"When Maya Met Andy" depicts a broken stereotype as Abuela has more energy than the children at the beginning of the episode. They pant while she walks calmly. Respect is demonstrated for her authority in that Maya and Miguel ask her permission to meet their new neighbor. Their respect and admiration for her also come out in that Abuela is described by the children as someone who makes everyone feel comfortable.

The children are shown as eager to welcome a new child into their group. They are also represented as helpful and cooperative – they decorate the community center and they set the table for a meal. They are represented as very active children – jumping rope, dancing, and playing baseball, basketball, and roller hockey, among other things. They first do not know how to react when they notice Andy's disability, but they soon realize they should treat him normally. Maya and Miguel's parents are never seen in this episode.

In "A Little Culture," adults are shown to be interested in museums, while children are shown to be interested in movies. Santiago is pictured as a kind father

driving his children and their friends to a movie. He has power in that he drove them to the theatre, but the children seem to make the decision as to whether they will go home or go to the museum. The children are portrayed as respectful in that they thank Mr. Santos for bringing them downtown. The children display thoughtfulness as they agree to go to the museum so that Mr. Santos can see his exhibit. Even though the children are respectful and grateful to Santiago, he is still represented in the text as an outsider – he is part of “them” (adults) rather than “us” (kids). He wants to do something none of the children want to do. He is the only adult in the episode, other than perhaps the theatre usher. After he pairs up the children, he goes off on his own to see the exhibits.

While Maggie and Theo are shown to be very upset with Maya and rather rude (e.g., “Yawn!”), Miguel is supportive of her. Maya is depicted as a peacemaker; she cannot stand for her friends to be angry with her. At first, Maggie and Theo refuse to engage in the experience with stereotypical childish boredom, but then they are represented as imaginative as they finally examine the exhibits. Theo is also shown as a responsible boy who recognizes when it is time to meet Mr. Santos and leads Maggie back to the meeting place.

While her friends are upset with his daughter, Santiago tries to encourage Maya that her friends care about her. He is portrayed as jolly, cultured, and flexible. He does not seem to notice the children’s deep disappointment in missing the film.

Active vs. Inactive/Fit vs. Unfit. Stereotypically children are more active and fit than adults. In some places, the text echoes this stereotype, and in others, it turns it on its head. Overall, physical activity seems to be encouraged by the text. Because childhood obesity is a popular concern, I would guess this is a deliberate effort to portray activity as

fun in order to encourage today's youth to exercise. This also seems to tie back to Figueroa's comments about PBS' new initiative on cooking and healthy eating.

From the introduction teaser to each program, we can see the promotion of physical activity. The children are shown playing soccer, running, riding skateboards, and walking pets. The adults and Maya and Miguel are also shown dancing. During the interviews with the Scholastic personnel, this theme was never mentioned; however, the presence of sports was certainly not lost on the children viewers.

Physical activity was particularly evident in "A Rose is Still a Rose," as Miguel tries to learn wrestling; "After School," as the girls are shown in gym class playing volleyball; in "Friends Forever?" where the boys are shown playing soccer; "When Maya Met Andy," where all of the children are active as they prepare for their sports-themed party welcoming Andy; as Miguel, Theo, and Andy play basketball on an asphalt court; and as all of the children play baseball in the closing scene; in "The Pen Pal," as Miguel is described as a soccer "phenom" and Maya as a famous cyclist who has journeyed to the top of Mt. Everest, and Roman also speaks of outdoor activities in rivers and the ocean in Puerto Rico.

On the other hand, Santiago fills the role of a stereotypical adult – he is the least active character. We know he goes dancing in "La Neuva Cocinita," but we never see him in action. When he does engage in physical activity in "Role Reversal," he pants loudly, needs help to do sit-ups, and evidently falls asleep during the stretches. The text clearly portrays him as unfit.

Where the stereotype is turned around is with Rosa as she deftly handles the soccer ball and runs with the kids at soccer practice. Even Abuela Elena, who appears

overweight, is shown by the text to be in better shape than the twins. As they walk down the street together, Maya and Miguel become weak and beg to sit and rest, while Abuela Elena appears energized.

What do these age representations mean? The text tells us that adults are wise, patient, and caring. The text presents adults as forgiving, encouraging, perceptive, hardworking, and willing to teach and help their children. They are represented as calm, honest, supportive, and realistic. They want to please their children or grandchildren and can sometimes be manipulated by them. The text teaches that, while most adults are great, a few adults are stupid. Adults can be skeptical, discontent, and busy. Adults are normally in the background. The text shows that adults are generally out of shape compared to the young, but they are usually still depicted as vibrant. The text presents adults as comforting, understanding, and cool. They are creative and interested in culture. They are sometimes wistful for the past. They have various skills. They tend to make people feel comfortable. They are flexible and of good humor.

The children are more prominent. Although the children appear more often and are frequently shown without adult supervision, when the adults *are* in an episode, the children are respectful to them (except toward Mr. Dombrowski). The text often shows that adults are in authority.

The young are presented in the text as impatient, self-absorbed, and often given to panic. They can be rash, rude, and unyielding to authority. The text shows some of them hold grudges. On the other hand, the text also shows children as encouraging, mature, kind, and wise. They are helpful, respectful, thoughtful, and thankful. They get excited about going to the movies. At first, they do not appreciate culture until they find a

personal connection with it. They often expect perfection of themselves. They can be gullible.

The text shows adults and children in both positive and negative lights. This seems to be a realistic portrayal of us all. As a parent, I deeply appreciate the overwhelmingly positive depiction the text offers of adults. I know of only one other children's program – animated or not – that portrays adults in such a nice light (i.e., *Little Bill*).

Representation of Gender

The gender of the characters is displayed through their appearances, their words, and their actions. Many of the depictions follow gender stereotypes, but others flip them around completely.

Appearances. Gender distinctions can often be made through clothing and accessories. While Maggie and Chrissy almost always are pictured in skirts, Maya wears jeans. She is not masculine in appearance, but I wonder if the jeans are symbolic of her “wearing the pants” in their friendship? Generally the characters wear the same clothes in each episode. There are a few exceptions when they are shown in swimsuits (“A Rose is Still a Rose”), soccer uniforms, or costumes.

Maya's normal outfit entails a white t-shirt, orange sweater with yellow flowers, a pink heart necklace, pink ponytail holder, yellow ball earrings, blue jeans, white socks, and orange and white tennis shoes. She wears her hair in a long ponytail. Maggie normally wears a red sleeveless shirt with yellow spots, a red skirt, red ball earrings, two tiny yellow hair bows, and red tennis shoes with yellow stripes. Chrissy usually has gold

hoop earrings, a wide pink headband, a white shirt, pink sweater, yellow skirt, and fuchsia Mary Jane-type shoes.

Rosa wears a white collared shirt under a pink long-sleeved sweater and yellow Capri pants with pink pumps, which seem to point to traditional femininity. Interestingly, when watching “A Rose is Still a Rose,” it occurred to me that *rosa* means pink. Her mother, Abuela, wears a yellow dress with a blue vest, brown shoes, her hair in a bun, gold hoop earrings, and her glasses are worn around her neck on a chain of red balls. The dress has a geometric design at the bottom hem and on the edges of the sleeves.

Santiago’s mother, Tata, is shown wearing a pale yellow pantsuit, light blue sweater, blue Keds-type tennis shoes, earrings, a gold necklace, and pink-tinted glasses. Her hair is black with gray streaks. None of the female characters follow the current trends of bare midriffs, short skirts, tattoos, or heavy make-up.

Miguel usually wears a blue shirt with buttons with a white undershirt that shows at the neck, dark blue cargo pants, and red and white tennis shoes. Perhaps this choice of shirt color is to reflect back on his position in the twin yin-yang – he is the boy, he should wear blue. Andy normally wears a green shirt with an orange and yellow design on it, jean shorts, and black and white high-top tennis shoes. Theo usually wears a teal basketball-style shirt with a white number 2 and white sleeves – apparently a white undershirt beneath the jersey, khaki cargo pants, and khaki and white tennis shoes that match his pants. Perhaps this is a stereotypical representation of an African American wearing a sports jersey.

Tito’s normal outfit includes a green t-shirt, khaki pants, and brown tennis shoes. Santiago usually has a light green polo-style shirt, gray pants, and black shoes. Each of

the male characters look neat – there are no stereotypical sideways caps, no boxers showing under baggy pants, no chains, no handkerchiefs, and no apparent gang paraphernalia.

Examples of gender portrayals in action. In “A Rose is Still a Rose,” the three girlfriends are pictured on sun chairs reading magazines and sipping drinks. Most of this episode has the girls wearing swimsuits: Maya in orange, Chrissy in purple, and Maggie in blue. Maya and Chrissy’s suits appear to be halter tops with swim shorts, while Maggie’s suit scoops up at the thigh. Paco is even pictured in a swimsuit – an old-fashioned striped suit that has straps on his “shoulders” and covers him to his “knees.”

When Miguel asks the girls if they would like to play soccer with him, they say no. The text presents Miguel, the only boy in this episode, as clearly outside the girls’ group. The binary opposition between boy and girl here includes their dress (he is not in a swimsuit) and their interest in different activities. While the girls lie in the sun, Miguel plays with a soccer ball. Further gender differences can be seen as the storyline continues. Miguel expresses interest in the wrestling he sees on television, while Maya’s storyline involves caring for roses. It is also Miguel’s dad who expresses pleasure at seeing Miguel’s wrestling imitation. We never see Rosa in this episode.

In a more non-stereotypical role, Miguel’s wrestling mentor is a baker. To learn the basics of wrestling, he has Miguel twisting cinnamon rolls, tossing pizza crust, and mopping the floor. There are no gender differences seen with regard to the children’s impatience – they all expect things to happen more quickly than they do.

In “After School,” the episode opens on the three girls together – this time they are playing charades in Maggie’s bedroom. As Maya says the voiceover, Maggie is

shown being “perfect” (in Maya’s view) at various activities: academics, gymnastics, and fashion. Later in the story, Maggie’s gender comes through in her manner of handling a problem (detention). After doing a formal-looking presentation for Mr. Nguyen trying to convince him not to give her an “after school,” Maggie then moves into a song and dance number to change his mind. As in other episodes across the series, Maggie is shown to have a strong interest in fashion design. While this does not fit with the stereotype of her race/ethnicity, it does tell us she has followed a stereotypical interest in a “female” career. In the episode, she mentions her dream of going to fashion design school, and her mom uses the example of her first clothing design when she encourages Maggie not to give up after one mistake.

“Friends Forever?” opens with Maya working on the computer and talking about *las tres amigas* – the three girlfriends. The girls decide to open a lemonade stand. Each of them has a task: Maya is in charge of the sales pitch, Maggie has put together the ad campaign, and Chrissy has the secret recipe. The boys appear from around the corner playing soccer. Their ball almost hits the lemonade stand, but Miguel saves the day and catches it first. The hero and his friends are given a free glass of lemonade, although the girls snatch Theo’s glass back from him when he mentions the book report they should have been doing. The girls then comment that they would not have drunk the lemonade if one of their friends could not drink any – they would stick together. They say, “We stand beside each other no matter what.”

In this scene, Miguel is represented as powerful in that he saves the lemonade stand from destruction. The girls hold the power over the boys with regard to who gets to drink lemonade. This scene is rather stereotypical in the children’s gender roles – I would

have been surprised if the boys had been running a lemonade stand while the girls played soccer.

The story then takes us to the boys' soccer practice where the coach announces a forward position opening. Andy and Theo separately ask Miguel to coach them for the tryouts. Miguel tries to maintain his secret schedule of coaching them both, but is discovered. Both of his friends are shown reading while they wait for him to return from coaching the other boy.

In a bit of a twist on expectations, it is the girls who have put off their homework. The boys have already finished their report. The girls have decided upon a topic – to do *The Three Musketeers* for their group book report – but two of them have not finished reading. Maggie says she has read the book 10 times, but Chrissy obviously has not. She does not recognize the name Aramis and blushes when Maggie points out that she has not read the book. Chrissy is characterized by the text as the outsider in this scene. Maggie is the one with power – her power in this episode comes from her knowledge of the book.

In another unexpected portraiture, the three girls are shown at the back of their classroom while the three boys are shown sitting at the front. As they notice the girls ignoring each other, the boys comment in disgust, “Girls!” In the cafeteria, when the boys see the girls sitting at separate tables, Miguel says, “If they were a soccer team, they’d never score a goal.” The boys discuss how they would never maintain their anger like the girls have done, but when they discover Miguel has been coaching them both, the anger ensues. To both genders, the text seems to teach the lesson of pride coming before a fall (i.e., Proverbs 16:18).

What would seem to be uncharacteristic for boys, they are shown returning each other's things, just as the girls did. Another interesting point is that when the friends are mad at each other, everyone sits at a separate cafeteria table for lunch except Maya and Miguel, who stick together. This made me think of SYDNEY's comment about trying to encourage her children to be each other's friend and support. In the end, the girls reconcile over lemonade while the boys reunite on the soccer field.

In "Give me a Little Sign," most of the storyline centers on two boys, Tito and Marco. They are shown playing basketball with Miguel and inventing something for the "contraption convention" at school. The binary opposition involving gender in this episode revolves around a brief scene with Maya. She is shown imagining a contraption for Tito's contest that would remotely control a soccer ball, which in her imagination, scores a goal for her team in a boys-against-girls game. Whenever Maya is actually shown playing soccer in other episodes, she is on a team *with* boys; therefore, this caught my attention. While Maya's fantasy focuses on beating the boys, Miguel, on the other hand, imagines a robot to do his chores in the pet shop.

At school, Tito is shown to have a crush on a blond-haired girl in his class named Veronica. Veronica addresses Tito in class, but he becomes embarrassed because of his thick accent. When Tito comes to talk with Abuela about his concerns over his accent, he helps her fold tamales. She comforts him and encourages him to do his best. When he notices her accent, he is excited that he is like Abuela. The text seems to be toying with the idea of "who is the 'other'?" Tito is represented as someone who feels like an "other," but who, after some encouraging words and an empowering incident, no longer feels separated.

In the final scene, Tito teaches the word “friend” in Spanish and tells Veronica the feminine form, *amiga*. Another aspect of gender portrayals in this episode involves the gender of the adults. Except for a brief appearance by Santiago in the pet store, the main adults in this episode are women: Ms. Lim, Miss Hasting, Marco’s mother, and Abuela. Therefore, the female characters appear to have more power – these adult females have authority and knowledge. In addition, Veronica has emotional power over Tito, though she does not seem to recognize it.

In “La Nueva Cocinita,” an emphasis is placed on how Maya and Miguel’s differences actually help balance each other. Though their gender is never mentioned, that seems to be a logical way that they balance, and it fits with the pink and blue modified yin-yang shown behind them during the opening teaser and on the logo. The twins are shown on a teeter-totter in the opening scene of this episode to offer a visual image of their balancing act. They discuss a somewhat stereotypical idea of how Maya “keeps Miguel on his toes,” while Miguel “keeps her feet on the ground.”

Near the beginning of the program, Maya and Miguel are shown playing a board game together with Paco. Strangely, Paco has evidently won several times. Later, as the twins look through Abuela’s cookbook, it is Maya who asks to cook them, while Miguel appears ready to eat them – his mouth waters, his eyes turn to hearts, and his stomach growls.

Throughout the episode, male and female characters are shown helping one another cook and clean – both in the present storyline and in Abuela’s memories. Abuela comments on how she and her husband cooked together and that she “liked things a little spicier than he did.” This same opposition is shown with Maya and Miguel later in the

episode – complete with Miguel sticking his head under water in the sink just as Abuelo Ernesto was shown in Abuela's memory.

All of the major characters appear in this episode. Theo, as usual, is depicted as an intelligent boy. In this episode, he has designed a digital camera/pen/nail clipper/toothbrush/gum dispenser. Maggie, in an unusual move, is shown as ditzy as she forgets the boys' secret signal that someone is coming and asks them why they are coughing. Her fashion sense is shown again as she displays for Maya her two stopwatches – one in lavender, one in pink ("rose petal").

While Abuela follows the traditional female characterization of watching a romantic movie and offering grandchildren hot cocoa, she defies stereotypes as she quickly puts together Tito's model plane. She is also shown wearing a lavender feather boa and flamenco hat, and she mentions to the twins how these used to catch men's eyes.

When the children are shown walking through the neighborhood announcing the news of the one-night opening of the new restaurant, they are dressed in raincoats. Maya wears pink, Theo and Miguel wear yellow, and Andy wears green.

Maya is shown as the leader of the group. She has the idea for the restaurant and convinces her friends and brother to join her team. She wears the chef outfit, while all the other children are dressed as staff. She keeps a positive attitude even when things begin to go wrong, but when she gets to a breaking point, it is Miguel who comes to the rescue and encourages her to keep going.

Miguel is shown resembling his grandfather from the earlier memory scenes – he turns red as he tastes something spicy Maya made; and he almost drops a tray of dishes, but Maya scoots a chair under him just in time. In the end, the voiceover says that yin and

yang got back into perfect balance, but I never noticed Maya and Miguel being out of balance with each other.

In “Miguel’s Wonderful Life,” Miguel opens and closes the program with the voiceover. Usually the voiceovers are done by Maya, but this episode, as well as “When Maya Met Andy” and “Soccer Mom,” are the three among the analyzed episodes that were voiced by Miguel.

Maya brings Miguel breakfast in bed in this episode. In a silly attempt to clean up, she picks up his homework to mop up the orange juice she spilled. While she is shown messing up Miguel’s things, Maya is also portrayed as incredibly considerate of others – she defends Theo, she encourages Mr. Nguyen, she plans a party for her class, and she takes gifts to the neighbors. Miguel, on the other hand, is shown as impatient and frustrated with her – enough to say “I wish I never had a sister!”

Miguel is normally characterized as an athletic boy, but this is one of the episodes that also focuses on his artistic abilities. He has painted a family portrait to give his parents for Christmas. When Maya messes it up, that is when he wishes she were gone. In the end, he repairs the painting and makes another especially for Maya. Miguel is also shown to love animals.

Maggie and Chrissy are the other main female characters in this episode, and they are shown fighting over their holiday headwear. Maggie is, again, characterized as a “fashionista.” She speaks of the color of the season in Milan, and that, therefore, she and Chrissy should wear apricot-colored Santa hats.

As they hand out gifts to the neighbors, Maya is dressed as an elf and asks Miguel to dress as Santa. Unfortunately the costume is too big for him and the pants fall down embarrassing Miguel during the *parranda* for the Okries.

In “Role Reversal,” while the adults and children change places, there are no portrayals of exchanging male and female roles. The three girls are shown at dance class and Miguel is shown at soccer. The girls’ other interests and activities are discussed including the school newspaper and social studies homework. Maya imagines her mom at home eating bonbons on the couch and wishes she could be an adult. Her friends agree.

At home that evening, the four Santos family members are all tired or sore. Abuela serves their dinner. She also performs the more traditional roles of watching the children and helping groom Santiago after he became covered in llama hair.

Maya suggests that the parents and children switch places for a day. Santiago is shown dreaming of playing soccer and happily agrees to the switch. At “Saturday Fun Club,” which appears to be at their school, Rosa gets her face painted by Kylie, Chrissy, and Maggie, while Santiago, Theo, and Andy make paper airplanes and get in trouble with the teacher. After leaving the school, Rosa goes to dance practice as Santiago heads to the soccer field. Rosa has trouble stretching her leg up to the bar, while Santiago is winded and falls at soccer practice. After running the pet shop for the day, the kids are sent upstairs to clean the apartment.

“Soccer Mom” involves Rosa taking over as coach of Maya and Miguel’s soccer team. Strangely, the make-up of the soccer team seems to change from episode to episode. Sometimes Maggie and Chrissy are shown on the team, and sometimes it

appears to be made of all boys. This team includes all of the main characters but has only seven players.

Miguel's opening voiceover praises mothers. He talks about how his mom helps with his school projects and never loses her cool, but how "sometimes you wish they weren't so good at everything." After the coach announces he is leaving, Rosa and Santiago are shown on the phone calling other parents asking if any of the team members' dads can take over the coaching position. While Rosa talks, she does some fancy footwork with a soccer ball – in her pink pumps, no less. All of the fathers are described as too busy to coach the team, but when Maya and Santiago notice Rosa kicking around the ball very skillfully, they suggest she should take over. Maya tells her she is good at explaining, she is nice and fun, and Santiago adds that she is good with a soccer ball.

Maya thinks Miguel will be equally pleased with their mom as the coach, but when she announces it to him, he faints on the kitchen floor. He expresses his displeasure, but Maya tells him, "Women can be coaches just as much as men." Miguel explains why he thinks she should not be the coach: "Number one, she's our mom. Number two, she's a girl. Number three, she's our mom. Number four, the guys won't think it's cool."

Rosa's coaching style is definitely different than what the children are used to having. She has them do yoga to warm up and has them sing songs as they run their laps. This is one of the aspects of the show that I dislike (e.g., Eastern mysticism shared through yoga). Surprisingly to me, none of the parents I interviewed mentioned it.

Rosa also teaches them a cheer, “I’m a hawk and I can fly!” She encourages each of the children with very positive messages: “I know you can do it,” “*perfecto*,” and “great move.” She also changes up the assignments and puts Theo in as a striker and makes Miguel play defense.

There is some role reversal in this episode between Maya and Miguel. Miguel wakes Maya up in the morning seeking one of her big ideas – something he would normally want to avoid. The plot they concoct is to help Rosa forget to come to practice. They try this by having her eat lunch with Santiago one day and sending her an early birthday present – a foot massager she has to put together – on another day. They finally fire her and hire Mr. Dombrowski, who although he is a gym teacher, knows nothing about soccer or apparently about working with children.

While Maya and Miguel become embarrassed by Rosa’s style of coaching, her outfits, and her private stories of them, their friends fall in love with her. Andy says, “She gets you into the game so you feel really confident!” Theo praises her for having taught him a banana kick. He brings her flowers and says she has done wonders for his game. Andy comments, “I love my mother, but I wish she was cool like yours.” Andy also points out to the twins that Theo has a crush on their mom.

Rosa comes down from the stands and takes over from Mr. Dombrowski during the final minutes of the play-off game – apparently at his request, though this is not clear. Maya and Chrissy were busy talking when one of the other team’s goals happened. Later Maya accidentally scores a goal when the ball bounces off of her into the opposing team’s net. These two scenes seem to point to a lack of skill and/or interest in the game by the girls. In the end, Theo does a banana kick and Miguel taps it in to win the game. In

the final voiceover, Miguel says, “So that’s how my mom became our soccer coach. Cool, huh? I mean, how many mothers can teach a banana kick to the far post?”

In “The Pen Pal,” Miguel is connected with a pen pal in Puerto Rico via e-mail. The pen pal, Roman, ends up coming for a visit, which might have been looked forward to in great anticipation except that Miguel lied about his life trying to make it sound more exciting. In a few small reversals of societal gender norms, Miguel is shown inside writing his pen pal while Maya is shown outside riding her bicycle. Also, when Miguel dreams about his future, he imagines himself as a great novelist. Miguel is also shown helping his mother in the kitchen.

The children try to pretend they really are famous people to fool Roman and his grandmother. Their choices are somewhat gender-typical. Miguel is supposed to be a young soccer star. Maggie wants to be a famous recording star by the name of “Maggie M,” and the song she sings for Roman’s benefit is a love song to Miguel. Theo wants to be a famous photographer who has taken pictures from the space station. Andy wants to be a reporter for the Daily Times. Chrissy is represented as extremely dense in this episode. She gets excited because she “gets to hang out with all you famous people.” When someone mentions a fake achievement, Chrissy says, “You did? Why didn’t you say something?” The exception to the somewhat gender-specific occupations would be Maya, who has supposedly ridden her bicycle to the top of Mount Everest. After the two boys, Miguel and Roman, admit to lying to each other in their e-mails, in a very traditional display of power and gender, the father decides on the boys’ discipline, while Rosa stands up and says she will go get the dessert.

In “The Perfect Thanksgiving,” the entire family is shown cleaning the house to prepare for Tata’s visit – even Paco. Maya suggests they put together the perfect Thanksgiving for Tata, and Rosa volunteers to fix the dinner. Rosa says she’ll make the “most delicious turkey,” and Abuela mentions that she has some secret recipes. Santiago and Miguel are part of the discussion, but they simply list the foods they would like to eat or to have for Tata. The women are shown to hold the role of shoppers as they go to the market and select tomatoes, bananas, and a turkey, among other things. Miguel and Tito are present at the market, but Santiago is not. This echoes the stereotype that grocery shopping is for women and children.

Maya, Miguel, Santiago, Tito and some other male characters play a game of football in the park. They are shown in full uniforms. While Santiago falls asleep on the couch, it is the two grandmothers and mother who cheer wildly during the big Thanksgiving football game on television. The text illustrates a traditional picture of the women (and children) doing all of the cooking. When the power goes out, it is a woman who rescues the day. Tata comes up with the solution of frying the turkey outside in a can using Paco’s cage to hold it in the cooking oil.

In “When Maya Met Andy,” Maya decides to have a welcome party for their new neighbor, Andy. Maya and her girlfriends discuss party theme ideas, but Miguel points out none of them are boy focused. He suggests having a theme that they would all like: sports. As they prepare the community center for the party, both the boys and girls are shown to be clumsy: Maggie gets caught in a soccer net, Miguel runs into Maya, and Tito falls into the punchbowl.

When the twins invite Andy to Abuela's apartment for a meal, Abuela is shown cooking. Miguel sets the table, but Maya removes the silverware for fear of making Andy feel bad about having one arm.

All of the children are shown as physically active. Tito and Miguel play roller hockey, Chrissy and Tito dance, Miguel, Theo, and Andy play basketball, and Maya jumps rope. Also, Maya, Miguel, and Abuela are shown walking outside at the beginning of the episode. In the end, all of the children are shown playing baseball together. Maya strikes out as Andy pitches.

In "A Little Culture," the gender differences appear clearly as the children discuss why they like a particular movie and some exhibits in a museum. Maya, Miguel, Maggie, and Theo have all dressed up as characters in honor of a new movie release from a series they have been watching – along the lines of *Star Wars* – called *Return of the Space Nebula Elf Prince*. As the children sit in the car discussing the movie they wanted to see, Maggie wonders aloud what dress the princess is wearing. In the museum, Theo is captured by the action and adventure of the West African legends, while Maggie is fascinated with the clothing displayed and the romance of the stories from Ancient China. As Maggie enters the exhibit, her first comment is "nice outfit." While Theo imagines himself as the "lion king," Maggie imagines herself as the beautiful heroine, Ying-Ying, and pictures Miguel as the hero, Chang. Besides the romantic side of the story, Maggie also seems to enjoy bossing Miguel around in her own version of the wealthy-girl, poor-boy, unrequited-love story.

During these imagined stories, there are some interesting depictions of women, specifically mothers. In the Mali legend, the king has two wives – the first is good, and

the second is wicked. In the play from Ancient China, the mother of Ying-Ying (aka Maggie) is sarcastic and rude.

While her friends have found exhibits they enjoy, Maya is still in the gift shop trying to find something to buy to win back their approval. Miguel stays with her and tries to help. As SYDNEY mentioned, Miguel is somewhat shown as a simple-minded character in this episode. He jokes about different gifts that Maya could buy. In a good way, he is easygoing and maintains his good humor despite missing the movie – very unlike Maggie and Theo. In a bad way, though, while the others gain cultural understanding of their heritage and are satisfied by romance or adventure, Miguel is satisfied with some chocolate candy he finds in the shop. In the final voiceover, Maya says, “Theo got adventure, Maggie got romance, I got my friends back, and Miguel got a souvenir.”

Maya vs. Miguel. One of the most prominent binary oppositions within the text is the opposing portraits of the main characters, Maya and Miguel. Their most apparent difference is their gender, and this we can assume leads to at least some of their different characterizations. Maya is presented as a leader; Miguel is a follower. Maya is depicted as silly and easily distracted; Miguel is more focused and grounded. The text characterizes Miguel as artistic and athletic. Maya is illustrated as someone who likes to help people. Her portrayal does not include a specific talent like Miguel’s drumming, drawing, or painting. While she plays soccer, it does not appear to be her passion or her special skill. Her general leadership skills are demonstrated in each episode through her big ideas.

Maya's great ideas. The most prominent pattern across the series was the moment in the storyline when Maya had a big idea. It was announced with, "*Eso es!* That's it!" and sometimes, "*Tengo una idea!*" It was also visually represented with Maya's ponytail holder lighting up and her ponytail going up in the air. What generally happened after that was that Miguel would express apprehension. Every episode involved at least one idea from Maya.

In "A Rose is Still a Rose," Maya's big idea is to dress Paco as a scarecrow to scare away the pigeons from Abuela's roses. In "After School," Maya's idea is to dress a mop as Maggie, so the mop can stay after school. Maggie tells Maya this was the "lamest idea you've ever had." Maya tells her "you can't force genius." Maya has a second "*Eso es!*" moment when she suggests Maggie help Mr. Nguyen during recess. In "Friends Forever?" Maya's idea is to put the lemonade stand back out in hopes of winning back her friends. In "Give me a Little Sign," Maya suggests Marco and Tito work together on an invention for school.

In "La Nueva Cocinita," Maya's big idea is to open the restaurant using "*las recettas*" to cheer up the neighbors. In "Miguel's Wonderful Life," Maya's big idea is to hang the piñata from the lights. In "Role Reversal," Maya's great idea is to switch roles with her parents for a day. In "Soccer Mom," Maya suggests her mother be the coach of the team. In "The Pen Pal," Maya says "*tengo una idea*" about getting costumes from the community center so that Miguel could look like the next Freddie Adu and their friends could pretend to fill their fantasy occupations.

In "The Perfect Thanksgiving," Maya's grand idea is to put together a perfect holiday gathering for her grandmother from Puerto Rico. This Thanksgiving celebration

included having the perfect meal, a parade, and a football game. When the football game outside became a muddy mess, Maya had a second great idea to watch a game on television. In “When Maya Met Andy,” Maya’s “*Eso es*” moment came when she decided to throw a party welcoming Andy to the neighborhood. Finally, in “A Little Culture,” Maya’s idea is to go to the museum with her father.

I have it all under control. As opposed to Miguel, Maya thinks she has everything under control. Even as the theme song plays to open each episode, we see Maya taking multiple leashes to walk animals while Miguel holds one leash. In the end, the animals run around tangling the twins in the leashes. This seems to point toward Maya’s tendency to try to tackle too many things at once or perhaps things that are bigger than she realizes.

This control is also symbolized through Maya’s outfit during the cooking portion of the episode “La Nueva Cocinita.” She has decided to open a restaurant in their apartment to cheer up the neighbors using her grandmother’s celebrated recipes. While her friends and brother wear ties and white shirts suitable for wait staff, Maya wears a chef’s hat and white jacket. Maya thinks nothing can go wrong, even though Miguel points out that they are not allowed to use the stove. Things, of course, go horribly wrong – for example, the twins add cornstarch to the guacamole because it seems to be missing something, and they think that corn sounds good. Abuela discovers the impromptu restaurant and takes charge of the situation.

In “The Pen Pal,” Maya also thinks everything is under control. In this episode, Miguel’s pen pal from Puerto Rico comes to visit. Both boys wanted to impress each other, so they lied about their experiences. Now Roman is coming to their home and

Maya is called on by Miguel to help save the day. As Miguel worries about maintaining the lies, Maya is convinced everything is under control. As usual, things begin to unravel. The truth comes out and the boys apologize.

In “A Rose is Still a Rose,” we are given several flashbacks (to events we have never seen) plus a new piece of evidence that all show that Maya is not as in control as she thinks she is. The first flashback is prompted by Miguel, who asks Maya if she has things under control like when she was feeding their baby cousin. The second flashback is prompted by Maggie asking if this situation is like the time she thought she could handle carrying Chrissy’s birthday cake by herself. In this episode, Abuela Elena has to leave town with only days to go before a rose competition. Maya tells her she will take care of the roses, and then she almost immediately pricks herself on a thorn. She tells Abuela, “Don’t worry. I’ve got this under control.” Not long after that, she breaks the pot holding Abuela’s prize rose.

While generally it is Maya who thinks she has everything under control, in “After School,” it is another female character, Maggie, who learns that she cannot control everything like she wants. When the show begins, the three girls are shown playing in Maggie’s room. Maya notices a certificate on Maggie’s wall. Maggie tells them it is an award for punctuality and perfect attendance. Maya asks her what would happen if her alarm did not go off, but Maggie holds up two alarms to show how serious she is about keeping her perfect record.

What do these gender representations mean? Some traditional differences were apparent in the text with regard to gender and clothing choices: pink is for girls, blue is

for boys. Also, Rosa and Abuela wear pumps. Other differences were evident in the male and female characters' actions.

Female characters were shown reading magazines, lying in the sun, caring for roses, and playing charades. They cooked, they danced, and they cheered. They enjoyed fashion and romantic stories. Some were shown as considerate, others as bossy, and others as vacuous. Female characters were depicted doing a number of traditionally male activities: coaching, building, playing sports, and leading.

While it is nice to be described as someone who can do anything, that superwoman image represented in Rosa is a difficult standard to live up to. She is shown working in the store *and* in the home, while Santiago's work is limited to the pet shop. I believe this portrayal reflects the lives of many women. They work inside and outside the home and are often torn between the two. In this text, we never see Rosa expressing any of those feelings, nor would I expect to see them in a children's show. Although Miguel describes her as super, it is interesting that all of the activities demonstrated by Rosa in the text were not recalled by the audience. A few participants remembered her cooking and one remembered her shirt color. Despite her frequent appearances in the text, she was almost invisible to the adult and child audience.

Although Maya is a clear leader, what does it say that her ideas usually go wrong? On the other hand, what does it say that everyone – including her parents – continue to follow her ideas? I think the text tells us that Maya is charismatic and her intentions are good. Evidently because of those two factors, the other characters follow her lead. Also, at least one episode ("Miguel's Wonderful Life), points to the importance of Maya and

her ideas. Despite some of the negative results, she is depicted as the glue that holds these family members and friends together.

Boys were depicted in the text as interested in adventure, as opposed to romance. They wrestled and played basketball. They had crushes on female characters, they were followers, and they loved food. They were often shown as intelligent and creative. The fathers were portrayed as too occupied with work to coach.

There were other activities that both genders were shown doing in the text. Both girls and boys played soccer and football, read books, played instruments, cleaned the house, and served food. They both enjoyed going to movies and to the museum. The text showed boys and girls doing many activities together and suggested they can help and encourage one another.

The text alters the stereotype of the artistic girl/athletic boy by putting both qualities into Miguel's character. Maya, on the other hand, is known for her ideas and for helping people.

The text seems to feature Maya more prominently than Miguel. There are more adult women featured in the text than men, so it appears that the balance across the program of male to female prominence hangs slightly farther toward the female side.

Representation of Family

The Santos family is at the center of *Maya & Miguel*. There is a binary opposition shown in that Maya and Miguel have such an apparent presence of family in their lives, as opposed to Maggie and Chrissy's families whom we rarely see and Andy and Theo's families whom we never see. These friends, however, seem to become part of Maya and

Miguel's extended family and therefore, they will be included in the following discussion.

Nobody's perfect – don't give up. One of the clear prosocial messages coming through the text – mainly through family members toward each other – is that each person is special. This message comes through clearly in “Miguel's Wonderful Life” as Miguel recognizes the positive impact Maya has had on so many people. Because we are each one of a kind and fill particular needs in the world, the text teaches children not to be afraid of being different and to appreciate differences in others.

While the text says people are important, it also clarifies that none of us is perfect. We all have different difficulties that we must overcome. The text encourages children not to give up. This is particularly evident in “After School,” “The Perfect Thanksgiving,” and “Give me a Little Sign.”

For example, in “After School,” Maggie panics when she realizes she is late for school. Her mother tries to calm her. Her mother notices Maggie picking at her food at dinner that night after being given a detention at school. She asks Maggie what is wrong. Maggie is scared that her parents will find out she is not perfect. She becomes too fearful to give the form to her mom. When she finally reveals the truth, both of her parents calmly take the news that she was given an “after school.” Maggie's mother encourages her: “Maggie honey, nobody's perfect.” She mentions Maggie's first fashion sketch – “it wasn't perfect, but you didn't quit, did you?” In the end, Maggie takes the old drawing that her mom mentioned and puts it on the wall to keep her perfect attendance certificate company.

Interactions among child relatives. Miguel bothers Maya somewhat as he asks her and her friends to play soccer with him at the beginning of “A Rose is Still a Rose.”

Miguel is not supportive of Maya when she volunteers to care for Abuela’s roses.

Although Maya and Miguel sit down beside each other and share their frustrations in this episode, they do not seem to listen to one another. Both of their situations boil down to the need for patience. They both say at the same time, “Why is it taking so long?” When the pet shop becomes flooded, Miguel encourages Maya to be patient because they will get it taken care of “one bucket at a time.” When Maya repeats the phrase, it dawns on Miguel that this is what he needed to hear, too, and he returns to wrestling practice.

Miguel laughs at Maya when her friends are angry at each other in “Friends Forever?” He says, “*Las tres amigas* – broken apart!” When his friends are angry with him, however, it is his sister who sticks by his side and sits with him at lunch.

While “After School,” focuses on Maggie and her family, an interesting scene speaks to the connection between Maya and Miguel. When Maya first tries to come up with a great idea to help Maggie, she thinks of “Mop Maggie” – dressing a mop in Maggie’s hair bows and toilet paper – that would then sit in detention in her place. This, of course, is a silly idea and Maggie even tells her it is her “lamest” idea ever. Later as the children sit on the playground discussing Maggie’s situation, Miguel offers the same solution. When they tell him Maya already thought of that, his response is, “Great minds think alike.”

In “Give me a Little Sign,” it is Maya who suggests that Marco and Tito work together on their invention. Maya and Miguel are not as prominent this episode, but when they are there, they are supportive and encouraging of Tito.

In “La Nueva Cocinita,” we see Maya and Miguel playing a board game together. We also see them holding hands as they leave the butcher shop. This episode centers around the balance they bring to one another. This is clearly seen in the “restaurant” they open. Maya has the idea to open the restaurant, but Miguel points out that their grandparents ran *La Cocinita* as a team. Maya replies to Miguel, “*We* are the team!” As the restaurant night begins to go poorly, it is Miguel who comes to Maya’s rescue and tells her, “Let’s get to work!”

Maya takes breakfast in bed to Miguel in “Miguel’s Wonderful Life.” She searches around the room for something. When first watching it, I thought she was searching for what Miguel bought her for Christmas, but later, based on her interaction with her father, I think she was on a spy mission for him to find out what Miguel wanted for Christmas.

At school, Maya speaks highly of Miguel. She volunteers him to hang the piñata from the ceiling because he’s a great athlete and “can do anything.” Unfortunately, Miguel ends up in the punchbowl and is not pleased with Maya volunteering him. Maya also suggests several activities for Miguel to do with her to celebrate the holiday, including handing out gifts in the neighborhood, wrapping presents, and staying up to see Santa. Miguel does not seem as excited about the activities and is certainly not pleased with the costumes Maya suggests.

Miguel shows Maya his gift for their parents – a painted portrait of the family. While Miguel goes off to talk on the phone with Andy, Maya tries to “fix” Miguel’s painting, which turns into a disaster. When he returns and sees what she has done, he says, “It’s *always* an accident! I wish I never had a sister!” The next day when Miguel

wakes up and asks Paco, “Where’s Maya?” Paco responds that her name “doesn’t ring a bell. Is she like your imaginary friend Pépé?” When Miguel realizes that he no longer has a sister, his first reaction is, “Awesome!” He thinks he will have a great day and comments that he feels free.

As the day goes by, however, he sees how life would be without Maya – Maggie and Chrissy are arguing, Theo blows spitballs at him, Mr. Nguyen has quit because he did not feel appreciated, Tito has returned to Mexico because he was homesick, the family owns a hardware store instead of a pet shop, Abuela has stopped making tamales because they were too much work, and his parents have bought him underwear and socks for Christmas. Looking out the window toward the moon, Miguel says, “Oh, Maya. Where are you?” Paco says to Miguel, “If Maya did everything you say, why did you wish her away?” In the end, Miguel fixes the family portrait and paints a separate one of Maya for her gift. In this episode, Miguel seems to learn to appreciate his sister.

In “Soccer Mom,” Miguel approaches Maya to help him figure out a way to get their mother to stop coaching their soccer team. Before even arriving at the first practice, he explains to Maya that he sees a potential explosion when his two worlds of home and soccer collide. He awakens her after the first day of practice with Rosa as coach and tells her they need a “crazy harebrained scheme – you know, your specialty.”

When Miguel faces a crisis after he lied in “The Pen Pal,” he also sought Maya’s advice. At first she had told him he should not lie, but once the lie had been told and Roman was on his way, Maya tried to help Miguel pretend that his stories were true. The boys are both caught in their lies, for it turns out that Roman also exaggerated his

lifestyle to Miguel. In the end, Maya says in the voiceover that from now on they will trade true stories.

At the beginning of “The Perfect Thanksgiving,” Maya and Miguel are shown sharing the last piece of Halloween candy. In the voiceover, Maya comments that as the Halloween candy ends, they always know Thanksgiving is coming. Maya and Miguel are shown cleaning together as they prepare for their other grandmother’s visit. They dust, scrub, shine the bathroom floor, and clean up their rooms. Teamwork is definitely emphasized. For example, Maya climbs on Miguel’s shoulders to reach the shelves in her room.

Most of “When Maya Met Andy,” involves the children. The only adult shown during this episode is Abuela, who makes a brief appearance at the beginning when Maya and Miguel first see Andy moving into the neighborhood, and later when she has the three children over for lunch. Maya and Miguel cross the street, with Abuela’s permission, to meet this new neighbor, Andy. Maya offers him chewable vitamins as a welcome present, which leads Miguel to explain to Andy that Maya means well – “you get used to her eventually.”

Maya comes up with the idea of a welcome party. The children work together to decorate the community center by themselves. Cousins Tito and Miguel play roller hockey together, among other things, as they prepare for the fiesta. They plan and prepare a sports-themed party, but when they notice Andy’s arm, they do not know what to do. Maya is afraid that playing sports around Andy would make him feel bad or that he could get hurt if he tries to play.

Maya goes to Miguel's room the next morning to wake him up and ask for help resolving this problem. As is typical throughout the series, as Maya announces that she has an idea, Miguel's first reaction is "oh, no." While he generally resists Maya's ideas at the beginning, he always steps in and supports her efforts. Maya's suggestion is to have Andy over for lunch at Abuela's apartment. Miguel cannot resist Maya's prodding. He says, "I'm powerless against the face." They decide to take Andy to Abuela's because they say Abuelita makes everyone feel comfortable. While there, Maya is so overly concerned with making Andy feel comfortable that she makes a strange choice – she removes the silverware (that Miguel just set out) from the table before she sits down to lunch with Miguel, Andy, and Abuela. Maya decides chopsticks would be easier for Andy to use, so she eats a box of Popsicles so they can use the sticks. Miguel helpfully points out that her teeth are green, and that she may be taking sensitivity too far.

After lunch, the twins are shown in their own living room. Maya is sick from eating all of the Popsicles. Miguel mentions to her that Andy was on a baseball team in Wisconsin, but Maya assumes he must have been the team manager.

The next morning Miguel awakes to find all of his sports equipment deflated. Maya has purposefully thwarted any attempt that Miguel might make to play sports with Andy. Miguel asks her what he is supposed to do if he wanted to play by himself. She replies that she had not thought of that. Despite her faults in this episode, Miguel gives credit to his sister for his new friendship with Andy. In the end, the children are shown playing baseball together with Maya batting, Andy pitching, and Miguel catching.

In "A Little Culture," Maya and Miguel have dressed up as movie characters and gone to see a film on opening day with their friends, Theo and Maggie. The tickets are

sold out and Maya realizes she forgot to buy the tickets the night before. Maya suggests they go to the museum with her father knowing that he was looking forward to the exhibits on ancient cultures.

Miguel continues to support his sister throughout the episode. She is upset because her friends are mad at her. Miguel mentions that Maggie likes gift shops, so the twins spend the entire time in the gift shop trying to find something suitable to make up for Maya's mistake. They each hold up gifts they find, like a salad bowl, t-shirt, and candy, and ask the other twin what he or she thinks. Maya also tracks down Maggie and Theo and shows them gifts she was considering. Maggie and Theo do not give her their complete attention, but Miguel does. He appears content, supportive, and of good humor. He makes a joke to Maya about her being able to find new friends. He never shows anger to Maya like the friends do. Before they leave, he buys some Easter Island chocolate heads for himself.

Interactions among adult relatives. The parents evidently went dancing together in "La Nueva Cocinita," but we do not see it. We see them leave and re-enter the apartment dressed up and arm in arm. This is evidently a weekly event, too. Once they return from dancing, they sit in the kitchen eating together and enjoying some of Elena's old recipes. In Abuela's memories, we also see how she and her late husband, Ernesto, worked together running their restaurant. She tells the children that he would taste what she made, and she would taste what he made.

In "Miguel's Wonderful Life," Santiago and Rosa are characterized as hardworking adults. Both are shown working in the pet shop. They are also shown as generous, yet ignorant parents with regard to the gifts their children want. They are

depicted as powerful through their work, which brings in the money that allows them to be the gift-givers to their children.

In “The Perfect Thanksgiving,” the three women, Abuela, Tata, and Rosa, are shown picking out produce together at the market. Then later in the apartment they cheer together during a televised football game, while Santiago sleeps in a nearby chair.

The only adult in “A Little Culture” is Santiago, thus no interaction is really shown between the adults, but Santiago and Rosa are portrayed as loving, supportive spouses in “Soccer Mom.” Santiago is complimentary of Rosa’s soccer skills and encourages her to be the new coach of Maya and Miguel’s team. When she hesitates, he asks, “¿Por qué no, mi amor?” This question showed me he was supportive of her and the “mi amor” demonstrated his affection. Later, when Maya and Miguel try to trick Rosa into forgetting to come to soccer practice, they convince Santiago to take her out for lunch. Their arguments were that she has been working hard, that it would be romantic, and that the restaurant has the best flan in town. While the couple is shown to be loving, it is the flan that grabs Santiago’s attention. The parents are shown enjoying a lunch together and Rosa uses the term “mi corazón” as she speaks to Santiago. This, too, points to their loving relationship.

Interactions between children and parents. Santiago expresses pleasure seeing Miguel imitate a wrestling move on television in “A Rose is Still a Rose,” though he has a rug that he twirls above his head in place of another wrestler. Santiago also advises his son that he should pursue his interest in wrestling and that it would help him learn discipline.

In “After School,” the child-parent relationship shown is between Maggie and her parents. Her parents are clearly in power over her. This is demonstrated by her great fear about telling them of her detention. Instead of being angry, the text shows the parents as calm and encouraging to Maggie.

In “La Nueva Cocinita,” Rosa sends Maya and Miguel to the store to get groceries. She is shown with the power in this scene, though her suggestion was for the kids’ benefit. She was trying to provide them with another activity to stem their boredom. We do not see her again until she and Santiago are dressed up to go dancing. As opposed to the other scene, the parents are shown as powerless when they enter their apartment that has been converted into a restaurant without their knowledge.

In “Role Reversal,” as in many other episodes, the Santos family is shown around the dinner table together. When the scene begins, the family has evidently finished the main meal because Abuela is bringing out desserts – they appear to be flan and rice pudding. Santiago, Rosa, Maya, and Miguel each had a difficult day and they all came home tired and sore. Maya suggests that the kids and parents switch places for a day because each of them thinks the other has an easy life.

The next day the parents wait at the table for the kids to fix breakfast. Unfortunately, the smoke alarm goes off from the waffles the twins burn. For lunch at the Saturday Fun Club, Santiago and Rosa eat with Maya and Miguel’s friends and discuss the green meat that was served. After a day full of wrangling llamas, handling customers, and cleaning house, Maya and Miguel still had to make dinner. In the end, both the parents and children realize that everyone has challenges to face each day, and they are content with their place in the family.

Rosa is a central character in “Soccer Mom.” Through the voiceover given by Miguel about how “moms can do anything” and the recruitment of Rosa to coach by Maya and Santiago, great respect was shown by the rest of the family toward the mother. Miguel did not want his mother to become coach, however, because of what his friends might think. Once she becomes their coach, Maya also discovers that Rosa can embarrass her in front of her friends. Rosa calls Miguel “bébé” on the field, which causes him to lose the ball. He says, “*Mama!*” in an exasperated tone, and she explains that she thought nicknames were commonly used in sports. Andy and Theo begin calling him “bébé” just as he feared. Then Miguel overhears his mother telling the girls a story about him running through the house as a little boy with nothing but shampoo on. In another instance, Rosa has the kids sing an introduction song, “Hello, my name is Rosa and I want to get to know you. Hello, my name is Rosa, and I want to be your friend!” Miguel refuses to sing, and Rosa tries to encourage him to sing like she has heard him sing in the shower.

The embarrassment hits Maya when Rosa shows up in a brightly colored, out-of-fashion outfit. This is where Maya’s attitude clearly turns. She asks Miguel, “Who is *that?*” Rosa embarrasses her further when she tells Maya to run like it is José the pizza boy at the door. Rosa also calls Maya “shnooky-lumps” and has an annoying way of drinking water from a sports bottle.

The twins decide they have to get rid of her. They convince Santiago to take her to lunch for the “best flan in town.” As she is about to bite into the flan, she realizes the time and runs off to practice. Santiago happily eats her piece of flan in addition to his own. The next day as Rosa is at home cleaning, a delivery arrives. It says it is an early birthday present from Maya and Miguel and is a foot massager that comes in many pieces

that must be assembled. She works on it for a while and then her mother, Elena, comes by and finishes putting it together in seconds. Rosa notices the time and runs to practice while Elena sits down and enjoys the foot massager.

Rosa coaches the children in a very encouraging manner. A lesson seems to be promoted here that encouragement is the best way to lead. She continually tells the team members “nice job!”, “Great move, Andy”, “Great save, Chrissy”, “Tito, I know you can do it. I believe in you.” She also gives opportunities to the children for new challenges – “I want Theo to take it. He’s been working on his banana kick.”

Finally, the embarrassment becomes too much for them, and Maya and Miguel decide to fire her and ask Mr. Dombrowski to take over the team. He begins his first session with them by saying “Soccer is a game whereby it is played primarily with the feet, if I understand it to be correct.” Soon they realize that this was an unwise choice and they return to Rosa to ask her to come back. She tells them that they cannot keep asking their coaches to leave, and Maya says she guesses they will have to live with their decision. When they express their concern about their upcoming playoffs, Rosa tells the twins, “You kids play your best. That’s all anyone can ask.”

Rosa, Santiago, Elena, and Paco attend the game, as well as Tito’s parents, Ernesto and Teresa, though they are not pointed out by name. At some point Mr. Dombrowski leaves the field and apparently asks Rosa to step back in as coach. She takes over the position again and encourages the children on to a win.

Miguel’s opinion changes completely by the end voiceover where he mentions how cool it was to have his mother as a coach. Through this experience and learning their

friends' perceptions of their mother, one of the lessons seems to be "what may not be cool to you, may be cool to others."

In this episode, I was curious why there were no parents shown at the pizza parlor when the coach announces he is leaving. From my experience, there would be at least a few mothers there helping chaperone the children.

"The Pen Pal" begins in the pet store with the kids talking to Santiago. Miguel mentions his Puerto Rican pen pal, which causes Santiago to reminisce about his childhood in Puerto Rico. Rosa comes around the corner asking Miguel to clean the cages in the shop. During the episode, as Miguel tries to come up with a more exciting life to tell his pen pal, he helps his mother in the kitchen and his father at the pet store. For some reason, Miguel does not seek his parents' advice on how to handle his pen pal crisis. At the end of the episode, the pen pal and his grandmother come for dinner at the Santos's apartment. Maya and Miguel try to continue their charade of pretending to be famous athletes with famous parents, but Miguel finally tells the truth and apologizes, which prompts Roman to admit he, too, lied about his life. Santiago suggests that the two boys clean the cages in the pet shop for their punishment. Rosa goes to get the dessert.

The parents do not appear in "When Maya Met Andy," and Santiago is the only adult family member to appear in "A Little Culture." He is shown as the kind adult driving four children to the movies. His plan is to go to the museum across the street, while they watch the film. When they discover the movie is sold out and Maya forgot to buy tickets, they get back in the car, and he expresses his disappointment. Maya says a half-hearted "*Eso es!*" and suggests the children go with Santiago to the museum.

Once they enter the museum, Santiago pairs them up and heads for the Aztec exhibit on his own. Later Maya finds him and shares her concern about her friends being upset. He wisely counsels her not to worry, that her friends care about her. Just then, a man in the museum offers four tickets to the next showing of the film. The children meet back with each other and decide to go to the movie then and to come back to the museum the next weekend. Santiago mentions that they should visit the Ancient Maya exhibit on their next trip.

Interactions between children and grandmothers. Across the series, there are four different grandmothers featured. The main one, of course, is Abuela Elena who makes an appearance in most of the scripts. In “The Perfect Thanksgiving,” Santiago’s mother comes for a visit from Puerto Rico. The children call her Tata. In “The Pen Pal,” Miguel’s pen pal comes to visit from Puerto Rico with his grandmother, who we hear referred to as Mrs. Ramos. In another episode outside this analysis, Maggie’s grandmother is introduced. It is interesting that there are no grandfathers in the storylines. There are older gentlemen, such as Señor Obregon and Señor Felipe, in the stories, but never a grandfather of one of the characters.

Maya and Miguel are afraid Abuela has lost her mind when they catch her singing and talking to her roses in “A Rose is Still a Rose.” When Maya finds out that her grandmother is about to leave town and is concerned about her roses, she quickly volunteers to take care of them. Maya makes some mistakes and damages Abuela’s prize rose. When Abuela returns, Maya asks for her forgiveness, which she gives. Abuela teaches Maya that flowers require patience, and she trustingly asks her to watch them again next month when she has to leave again.

In “After School,” the twins are shown having tacos and milk with Abuela after school. We never see Santiago or Rosa in this episode, which appears to line up with what several of the parent participants mentioned during the interviews – that Abuela is perhaps more like a mother and that the parents are background players. Abuela tells Maggie that “nobody’s perfect” and that you just have to “learn from your mistakes.” Maya asks, “I’m perfect, too, aren’t I, Abuelita?” To Maya’s surprise, Abuela responds, “Perfectly irrepressible.”

When Tito is in distress about his accent in “Give me a Little Sign,” it is Abuela he seeks. We certainly see him with her more often than we see his parents. In this scene, Tito helps her as she makes tamales. As she tries to comfort him, she asks him to hand her a yellow cup, but it comes out sounding like “jello” – just like Tito says the color. Tito lights up realizing that he is not alone. His grandmother edifies him by telling him that an accent is part of a person and that she just tries her best – “that is all that matters.”

Abuela and her life are central to the story line of “La Nueva Cocinita.” Maya notices that everyone is discouraged after a week of rainy weather. She talks with Miguel about what they could do to help everyone: “There’s got to be someone in the neighborhood who’s not down in the dumps.” At the same time, the twins look at each other and say, “Abuelita!” This shows that they think of her as an upbeat lady who can help them solve their problems.

When the children arrive, they find Abuela reveling in her “trunk of treasures” reliving her past. They thank her for sharing those treasures with them. They also ask her about cooking some of the recipes found in the trunk that were from her restaurant that

she owned with her late husband. She tells them that those are for memories now, but she invites them to join her for popcorn and a movie, *Dancing in the Rain*.

As they walk down the hall to their own apartment, Maya talks to Miguel about her concern for their grandmother – she thinks she is discouraged, too. This is when the idea emerges to re-create Abuela’s restaurant in their apartment for one night only. The children sneak around Abuela to get copies of her recipes and then they spread the word among the neighbors. Abuela enters in the middle of their experiment and ends up having to take charge of the kitchen. After seeing how happy the recipes made people and how determined her grandchildren were to cook them, Abuela offers them cooking lessons to start the next day.

Abuela was not part of the storyline in “The Pen Pal” at all. Instead, it is Roman, the pen pal from Puerto Rico, who has his grandmother on the screen. Mrs. Ramos is shown as skeptical of Maya and Miguel’s stories. She often makes a “hmph” sound but rarely speaks.

In “The Perfect Thanksgiving,” Santiago’s mother has come for a visit. Maya wants to make it a perfect holiday celebration so that Tata can see all of the U.S. traditions. Miguel lists a number of traditional U.S. dishes that they should eat. Santiago also suggests including some Puerto Rican dishes in honor of his mother. The whole Santos family goes to the airport to pick her up. Rosa, Abuela, Tata, Maya, Miguel, Tito, and Paco all go to the market to shop for produce and a turkey. While Maya tries to help thaw the turkey in the kitchen, Miguel tries to keep Tata busy by telling her the history of Thanksgiving.

Santiago, Maya, Miguel, and Tito demonstrate a game of American football for Tata at the park in the rain and mud. The twins then clean up and try to help Tata get settled in to watch a football game on television – Maya has referred to this viewing of the game as a family as the best Santos Thanksgiving tradition ever. Maya tries to adjust her grandmother's chair but ends up covering Tata in chips and dip. The two grandmothers are shown cheering along with Rosa for the football game while Santiago sleeps, and the children continue to thaw the turkey in the kitchen with hairdryers.

Tata expresses her displeasure with the family working so hard to make the day perfect. She tells them that no matter what had happened, it would have been perfect just being with each other. When the power goes out in the apartment, Tata suggests frying the turkey outside. She says, "*Tengo una idea!*" just like Maya. The family element is reinforced with Paco agreeing to let his cage be used to fry the turkey. He was hesitant to relinquish it, but finally says, "OK. If it's for the family."

The entire family unites around the dinner table outside and is later shown playing instruments – that were supposed to be part of a parade Maya had planned – around the fire enjoying one another's company as the final voiceover is spoken. In that voiceover, Maya comments that it was a "perfectly weird, weirdly perfect Thanksgiving."

Teamwork. Teamwork is evident even from the introductory song (see Appendix Q) and animated opening to the program. This theme is prominent in "Friends Forever?" as the girls run a lemonade stand together, the boys play on a soccer team together, and both sets of friends complete group book reports. The three girlfriends team up in "A Rose is Still a Rose" to take care of Abuela's roses and then to clean up the pet shop after it floods. All of the children work together to create "La Nueva Cocinita" for one night in

the Santosés' apartment. First they work together to sneak out copies of Abuela's recipes, and then they promote the restaurant around the neighborhood. They assemble the dishes, clean the kitchen, and serve the customers.

Maya and Miguel work as a team to help prepare the Thanksgiving dinner in "The Perfect Thanksgiving." The children send Rosa to rest and to enjoy the football game. Maya comments to Miguel, "We are Santosés. We don't let a chunk of ice turkey get the better of us!"

All of the children work as a team to prepare the community center for the welcome fiesta planned for Andy in "When Maya Met Andy." They also work together to make a fantasy world appear real in "The Pen Pal" as they try to maintain Miguel's lies to his pen pal. In addition, Tito and Marco demonstrate teamwork as they invent something for the school "contraption convention" in the episode "Give me a Little Sign."

What do these representations of family mean? With regard to prominence, Maya and Miguel certainly dominate the script. Abuela and Santiago tie for appearing in nine of the 12 episodes I analyzed, and Rosa appears in seven of them. To the parents and children I interviewed, Abuela seemed to be more of a major character than Santiago, so that is interesting that they were in the same number of episodes – at least in this group of 12. Perhaps Abuela is on the screen longer or perhaps she is more closely connected with the storylines.

In one particular episode, "The Perfect Thanksgiving," the Santosés are the "us" while the children's friends are portrayed as outsiders (i.e., "them") in that dichotomy. Maggie, Chrissy, and Theo are clearly supporting cast members with little to say in this

episode. They merely show up to help with the parade but seem to disappear once it has been cancelled.

The text describes the child family members as both supportive and divided. Generally Miguel is shown to be hesitant of Maya's ideas, but he always supports her after the idea is set in motion. The children are represented as friendly, sharing, and helpful toward each other. Both children are shown to be embarrassed by their mother while she coaches their soccer team.

The text portrays the parents as affectionate, complimentary, encouraging, and calm. Abuela is represented in the text as a comfort to her family. She cooks and watches the children. She also provides leadership and helps the family when needed. While there are two more grandmothers who make an appearance in this analysis, there are no grandfathers presented.

The text shows the family celebrating holidays together. Teamwork is emphasized in multiple instances in the text. The family cleans together, cooks together, and eats together.

Representation of Disability

While Andy is the primary character with a disability, another did appear in one episode in the fourth season named Marco. Most of this section will discuss the depiction of Andy, but Marco's portrayal will be analyzed as well.

Being different. Andy is introduced to the viewers in "When Maya Met Andy." Maya and Miguel notice two men unloading a moving van across the street. The items coming off the van catch their attention – lots of sports equipment and things indicating a new child had entered the neighborhood. They knocked on his door and introduced

themselves. Because they were standing at the door, evidently the twins never caught sight of Andy's arm. Maya decides to throw a party for him at the community center to welcome him to the neighborhood. The children, at Miguel's prompting, decide on a sports theme for the party.

When Andy shows up for the party, the other children are stunned when they notice his disability. It is Tito who points it out. He tells Maya that Andy lost his arm. Andy jokes about it: "What? Someone lost an arm?" He later puts disability in finger quotes and tries to make the children feel comfortable with his disability. He is excited to play the sports they have set up at the community center, but Maya is afraid he will hurt himself. She lies about a spider trying not to offend Andy, and she winks at Maggie who makes up a "Frankenstein foot dance" stomping around the floor so that no arms are required.

Maya feels bad about the party and decides that Abuela will know what to do – she makes everyone feel comfortable. She schedules lunch at Abuela's apartment, but she still is overly afraid of offending Andy. Andy tries to help in the kitchen, but Maya will not let him. She removes the silverware and replaces them with Popsicle chopsticks thinking those would be easier for Andy to use. Miguel suggests that she is taking sensitivity too far. Andy reveals that he was on the baseball team in his previous town, but Maya later tells Miguel that he must have just been the manager. She assumes Andy is powerless.

The next morning, Miguel awakes ready to play outside but discovers that all of his sports equipment has been deflated. Again, Maya has done something to try to avoid making Andy feel bad about only having one arm. When Maya finds Miguel playing

basketball with Theo, she diverts a local marching band to the court to keep them from playing. Andy sits down and pretends to cry. He says, “Oh, how I want to play the trombone!” Maya feels terrible that she has hurt Andy’s feelings and makes the band go away. Andy explains to Miguel, “I’ve got plenty of experience with people not knowing how to act with my disability.” When Maya returns, Andy tells her, “Your brother’s the first person who’s treated me like a regular person.” The final scene shows Andy pitching to Maya in a baseball game with all of their friends.

This episode seems to teach that people with disabilities want to be treated normally and that a disability does not take away a sense of humor or the desire and ability to have fun with friends. It also seems to be training viewers not to be overly sensitive and treat people with disabilities as if they cannot do anything.

Andy appears in “Friends Forever?” playing soccer with Miguel and Theo. He tries out for forward and earns the position as well as Theo. Andy also appears in “La Nueva Cocinita.” He stands watch with Miguel as Maya and Theo get in to copy Abuela’s recipes. He also serves the guests at the restaurant. In “Miguel’s Wonderful Life,” he appears in the classroom, on the phone with Miguel, and in the *parranda* scene.

Andy is a background player in the script for “Role Reversal.” He makes paper airplanes and plays soccer with Mr. Santos, while Miguel pretends to be his father for the day. In “Soccer Mom,” Andy is on the soccer team. He joins in the teasing of Miguel after Rosa calls him “*bébé*,” but later he expresses admiration for Rosa’s coaching abilities.

In “The Pen Pal,” Andy wants to pretend he is a reporter for the Daily Times who writes all of the “interesting stuff, including the comics.” He approaches Miguel for a

quote in front of Roman and his grandmother, trying to help Miguel appear to be a famous soccer player. No specific references are made toward his disability in any of these episodes. This lack of special treatment seems to indicate that people with disabilities can participate in activities just like other people.

Besides Andy, there is a second character with a disability in “Give me a Little Sign.” Marco is a deaf boy in Tito’s class. Tito first meets him at the pet shop before the school year begins. They strike up a quick friendship. The boys walk around the store with Marco showing Tito the signs for various animals. Marco’s mother helps train Tito (and the viewers) how to handle speaking to a deaf person. She tells him to look at Marco’s face as he speaks even though she will do the interpreting. Andy also appears in this episode and poses an interesting question to Marco – can he still sign with only one hand? The response is that he can, but certain words may be more difficult for a deaf person to recognize that way.

Despite his disability, Marco makes friends and wins the most creative award for his invention with Tito at the “contraption convention.” Marco encourages Tito about his English pronunciation problems by joking that he had never noticed Tito’s accent. This joke, as well as another he makes about the cafeteria food, points out that a disability does not have to steal your joy. You can have friends, and you can have fun. During the episode, Marco is shown doing normal activities with the rest of the group – including, playing basketball, going to school, and playing video games. He is represented as a powerful character in that he knows something most of the other characters do not (ASL) and he knows how to cheer up Tito. He also wins a prize, along with Tito, for their invention.

What do these representations of disability mean? Andy is represented in the text as a boy with a good sense of humor. He is quickly one of the “us” group – he joins Theo in teasing Miguel. He loves sports and is a talented player. The text reveals Andy’s fantasy is to be a reporter, although he is confused about the difference between being a reporter and being a comic strip writer. His only limit seems to be the ability to use sign language the same as everyone else. He is represented in the text as having power over his disability.

Marco, too, is shown in the power position over his disability. While either of these characters could be an “other,” they are quickly welcomed into the circle of Maya and Miguel’s friends. Marco is also shown with a good sense of humor. He is friendly and he is sensitive, particularly to Tito’s feelings.

While Marco only appears in one episode, Andy appears in about the same number as Abuela and Santiago. In some of those appearances, though, he is more of a background player. Both of these boys are shown with the power to make others laugh and the power to overcome any type of victimization from their disabilities.

Summary of Textual Analysis

Twelve episodes were examined in depth through textual analysis. This analysis method involves “soaking” in the text, viewing it multiple times, and noting patterns that emerge. I looked for themes, tried to see how those themes connected to each other, and noted the context for those themes. The context included the locations of the scenes, as well as the characters involved and their representations.

Major themes examined include the representation of culture, race, ethnicity, language, age, gender, family, and disability. In each of these sections, I examined the

“us/them” dichotomy – in other words, who was in a power position and who was the subordinate.

Generally, Hispanics were in the power position because of their prominence and vantage point in telling the stories. Also, children were more prominent than adults, placing them in a more powerful, dominant position. When the parents or grandparents were shown, they were respected and followed, but often they were on the sidelines of the story or not even present in an episode. With regard to disability, two characters –one major, one minor – fell into this category. While they could easily have been set to the side as “others,” they were instead embraced by Maya and Miguel and their friends. Their disabilities did not keep them from enjoying activities with their friends or maintaining their humor.

Other themes included Maya’s big ideas, the use of technology, the common display of male and female characters engaged in physical activity, the importance of teamwork, the centrality of food, how expectations often do not accurately reflect reality, the independence of the children, and the encouragement that no one is perfect.

Chapter VII

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine an educational children's animated television program, *Maya & Miguel*, and to see specifically how that program attempts to address several major issues of the day, including race, ethnicity, disability, language, and age, as well as how those presentations are decoded by the audience. The series was studied using qualitative methods: interviews, observations, and textual analysis. These methods were used in order to examine the audience's consumption and identification with the program in addition to the production team's decisions on how to produce the show and represent the characters. Interviews were conducted with children who regularly viewed the program, as well as with their parents. They were also conducted with several production team members connected with Scholastic Media. The children and their families were observed while watching an episode of the program. Finally, 12 episodes from the series were examined in depth using textual analysis.

While the focus of this paper was on four of the five moments in the *circuit of culture* (production, consumption, identity, and representation), the moment of regulation also is touched on here because of what was discovered in the study, particularly during the production-side interviews.

The Circuit of Culture: Making Connections

The *circuit of culture* and the interdependence and influence of each moment on the other can be seen in this analysis of *Maya & Miguel*. Each of the five moments was covered in this study to some extent: consumption, identity, representation, production, and regulation. While varying methods focused on one moment or another, it is difficult

to completely separate them from each other. How can you pull out representation from production when it is the producers deciding on the illustrations of the characters? How can you separate a child's consumption of the program from her identification with it? If producers are, in fact, trying to guide or teach children to speak another language or to appreciate others, then how can you separate regulation from production?

As suggested by Levine (2001), producers' perceptions of their audience can also impact production. This is a guaranteed challenge for anyone producing programs for children – the producers are adults who are trying to create something that the next generation would understand, enjoy, and learn from. In the case of *Maya & Miguel*, some audience members also directly influenced the production. When some parents expressed concerns about the theme song, the producers changed the offensive line before the second season (see Appendix Q).

The amount or type of consumption can certainly influence viewers' identities, too, and their identities can influence their consumption. Because several of the children identified with sports, they seemed drawn to the sports within the program. Their consumption of a program airing before *Maya & Miguel* also led a number of the children to become aware of the show and begin watching. For parents, the identity of PBS as a safe and educational network led them to feel comfortable allowing their children to consume the program even by themselves.

The representation of people and things on a program may also influence viewers' identities. The portrayal of a girl in leadership may impact girls watching the program so that they feel more comfortable and confident as leaders. The depictions of different races and ethnicities getting along well together may impact how children get along with others

at school or in their neighborhood. Support for this idea was shown through Scholastic's research; they found that watching the show changed children's perceptions of "others" in a positive way.

Through the interviews, I discovered that the production team's identities influenced the representations on the series. Team members' families and experiences often inspired characterizations or storylines.

The animated teaser that introduces the program sums the representation up well. The music and the images present the importance of family, friends, and teamwork. We see physical activity and lots of animals – both of which are prominent elements in the series.

It also presents the setting for the program: an urban environment. Most likely this was chosen because of the realism of a diverse group of people living in a city. Perhaps it was also chosen because of the familiarity and identity Scholastic employees have with city life, as they are based in New York City.

The desired regulation (i.e., moral guidance) of viewers by a production company, network, or financial supporter can influence the production process. The moment of regulation generally requires a long-term study. Although I did not intend to investigate this moment, several discoveries prompted me to include a brief discussion here. The first discovery was a quote from Hall (1997) that tied regulation to education. He suggested that education is used by adults to cultivate a particular set of beliefs and way of doing things among a society's young people: "What is this if not regulation -- moral governance by culture?" (Hall, 1997, p. 233). Some of the regulation goals of Scholastic, PBS, and the U.S. Department of Education came forth during the interviews. Programs

on PBS, for example, are expected to be educational. Besides teaching a language or history, they also appear to be designed to teach viewers to be more accepting of one another. The grants funding *Maya & Miguel*, at least in part, were looking for a program representing the diversity found in the “new America.” Again, these regulatory goals had to impact the production of the program. This is part of what makes the *circuit of culture* so powerful – the moments of consumption, identity, representation, regulation, and production support and interact with one another, hence the arrows from one moment to another linking them together with no specific order required (see Figure 1, p. 54).

Binary Oppositions

The production team behind *Maya & Miguel* attempted to offer a voice for those who are often marginalized. By including many characters who are traditionally considered “others,” the producers – through the text – offer the message that it is OK to be different. While that may not remove their “other” status in the eyes of those currently in power, perhaps it can encourage them by offering them a voice, and perhaps it can cultivate over time a different attitude and treatment of “others.” No other children’s animated program, to my knowledge, has attempted the creation of such a diverse cast of characters. The difficulty, however, is that with so many voices, some of them are not fully developed because of the limited time available.

Discussion of “Others”

In the family interviews, it seemed clear that the children recognized some differences between themselves and “others” within the program, although they were not racially based as I would have expected. A few pointed to heritages of characters in their descriptions – including associations with Mexico and China. One child pointed to

differences in skin color between two characters (lighter:darker), and two brothers mentioned Andy's disability. Many of the children and parents also mentioned the language differences, as far as the characters speaking Spanish while their own family spoke English.

Portrayal of "Others"

A variety of characters are treated as "others" in the series. For example, there are "others" with disabilities (i.e., Andy and Marco) who are quickly accepted into the group of Maya and Miguel's friends. The text presents proper ways for interacting with people who appear to be "others" like these characters. Their presence within the text reinforces the celebration of all people. This fits with the production team members' discussions of diversity – that they wanted children to value differences.

With regard to intelligence, there is a binary opposition of smart:stupid. The intelligent characters depicted in the text include Maggie and Theo, while Chrissy and Mr. Dombrowski fit in the opposite category. I assume their stupidity was created for comedic purposes, though it seems unwise to set up certain characters to be laughed at rather than laughed with. Interestingly, Maya and Miguel are not placed within either extreme. They are portrayed as average kids with regard to academics. They do their homework, but they do not seem stressed over it. I think they characterized them this way to show the viewers that there is a happy middle ground – that children do not have to put themselves under overwhelming pressure to be perfect.

Other binary oppositions represented in the text fall within the topics of family, culture, gender, and age.

The Family

Scholastic's producers wanted to present a very positive family. Based on the audience interviews and my textual analysis, they appear to have achieved this goal. Most of the family-related stories involve the Santos family. This sets up a binary opposition between those in this family and those outside. There are a few episodes in which the focus of the story is on the Santos family and the twins' friends become "others" (e.g., "The Perfect Thanksgiving"). In another episode (i.e., "Soccer Mom"), we even hear a character wishing he was part of the family. The twins' friends practically become extended family members with the Santos family, but that is not really the same. Does this tell us that Hispanic parents are closer to their children? Are Hispanic families better examples of ideal families?

With regard to family, there are a number of characters that are represented as single. While Andy and Theo both mention their mothers, we never see them or any other family members. Teachers, butchers, and mailmen show no trace of having families. While a few other families are briefly shown in the text (e.g., Maggie's parents), the focus is clearly on the Santos family.

Cultural Diversity

Scholastic's producers sought to present a culturally diverse society in *Maya & Miguel* to teach children to appreciate others. I believe they did this well, though not all of the children picked up on the cultural differences – but perhaps in the long run, that lack of seeing the "other" as an "other" achieves the goal of getting along well with everyone.

Some parents caught that educational goal and were pleased to have their children exposed to a number of different characters – one for the sake of offering her children someone to identify with more like themselves, one for the sake of better preparing her children for the diversity in the world. Diversity within the program seemed to be noticed and appreciated more by those mothers with racial/ethnic diversity in their own immediate families. None of the children mentioned diversity.

The program personnel were the ones to discuss diversity quite a bit – this was evidently a very important aspect of the program to them. They mentioned the desire to train children to value diversity, talked about how this program is the only diverse program for kids on PBS, and how the program “owned” diversity in the children’s television market. Diversity, to the production staff, involved differences in background, skin color, and accent, among other things. The Scholastic personnel discussed the differences between Puerto Rico and Mexico and native and immigrant characters. Two production team members and one mother identified themselves as “us” – members of the Hispanic group, which is the main focus of the program.

With regard to cultural portrayals, the lack of one particular topic caught my attention. There is an almost complete absence of religion. Religious references included Miguel saying “Happy Hanukah” to one neighbor, mentioning that some people celebrate Thanksgiving by thanking God, and Rosa leading the soccer team in yoga. How can you describe a culture without portraying its religious messages, beliefs, or symbols? The lack of religious references, particularly in “Miguel’s Wonderful Life” – an episode about Christmas, seems odd for a program designed to teach children about culture. Instead the culture shared in that episode focuses on the socially acceptable secular aspects of that

holiday – singing, parties, gifts, and Santa Claus. Perhaps the partial government funding influenced this political correctness.

The culture of many of the characters is represented throughout the series by food, music, language/accents, clothing, holiday celebrations (e.g., *parrandas* at Christmas), and sports (e.g., Mexican wrestling, soccer). A number of different races and ethnicities are portrayed in this series. They include Hispanic/Latino (Mexican, Puerto Rican, Dominican), African American, Asian American (mainly Chinese), Italian, Jewish, and African. There was a lack of exploration of “White” culture, however. Also, based on the interviews, Hispanic culture appeared homogeneous rather than clearly sharing the uniqueness of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Dominican customs. Something went wrong either at the encoding or decoding of these cultural cues because these viewers did not seem to pick up the differences. Also, Cuban, Central American, South American, and Spanish cultures were rarely, if ever, discussed. There was a brief nod to Judaism with the “Happy Hanukah” greeting Miguel gave to the neighbor mentioned above, but no further description or depiction of that culture was given, which left this neighbor in the “other” category.

One of the most prominent binary oppositions presented in the program is Hispanic:Non-Hispanic. It is interesting that the Santoses never refer to themselves as Hispanic or Latino/a within the text examined, but these are the terms the audience and production team use to describe them. While those terms are not used in the program, a clear division is still present between those who are Hispanic and those who are not. These differences can be seen in their skin color, names, language use, accents, food preferences, and home décor.

There is also a binary oppositional representation of natives vs. immigrants. The native U.S. characters include the six friends: Maya, Miguel, Andy, Theo, Maggie, and Chrissy. Maya and Miguel's parents, grandmother, and cousins are all presented as immigrants. Based on Chrissy's accent, I would assume her parents are recent immigrants. The immigrant characters have thicker accents. They sometimes struggle with homesickness. They love their new country, but they also have warm feelings and memories of their homelands. My interviews with the production team taught me that at least one of the goals of the program was to encourage immigrants as they learn a new language and as they make themselves comfortable in a new culture. This goal was clearly evident in the text, particularly with storylines involving Tito.

The U.S.-born children of immigrants (Maya, Miguel, Chrissy, and Maggie) are pictured as almost fully assimilated into U.S. culture. They are star-struck by pop singers and sports heroes. They enjoy U.S. foods, like turkey, yams, and cornbread, but also enjoy foods from their heritage countries, like tacos, rice, and tamales. While the Hispanic immigrant parents play soccer, their children have also added U.S. sports like basketball and baseball to their repertoire. I believe this sends a message that you can maintain your heritage while enjoying the cultural offerings of your new home. By having characters at different stages of immigration and assimilation, children are more likely to find a character with whom they can identify. One audience member picked up on the issue of assimilation and mentioned it in her interview. I think she was the only one to notice this because she had lived in another country for a while.

Culture Blind?

What fascinated me the most from the interviews was how the children would recall tiny details about a character's wardrobe or accessories, but they did not report the differences in characters' skin color. They remembered the girls' hair bows and headbands and the boys' clothes, but not the race of the characters. Perhaps some of this can be explained by their young age and lack of familiarity with world geography, but not even the obvious skin color differences seemed to be noticed, or at least commented on, by most of the participants.

Portrayal & Decoding of Gender Differences

In the teaser to the program, we see Maya pulling Miguel from scene to scene and grabbing more leashes than she can handle – she is clearly the leader. This female leadership was not appreciated by all of the audience participants. SYDNEY, for example, pointed to the political correctness of a working mother, take-charge sister, and stupid brother. On the other hand, at least one other mother and all of the production team pointed to the positive role model Maya could be for girls.

The boy viewers seemed drawn to the male characters and the girls to the female characters signaling a male:female opposition. While both girl and boy characters are depicted as physically active, there are some subtle differences. Some of the girls' activities are less team-based or competition-driven (e.g., volleyball in gym class, jump rope during recess, riding bicycles). It was fascinating that, although the program often shows girls playing sports, none of the children seemed to associate the girls with physical activity as they did with the boys. I think this can be explained through memory research, specifically "confirmation bias," which causes people to be "more alert and

more responsive to evidence that confirms their beliefs in comparison to evidence that might challenge their beliefs” (Reisberg, 2006, p. 420). It may also relate to the lower level of sports interest and/or skill the girls demonstrated in several episodes (e.g., “A Rose is Still a Rose”). While they were physically active across the series, there are some scenes that may point to a different attitude toward sports by the girls. For example, the girls expressed no interest in playing soccer with Miguel in “A Rose is Still a Rose,” and Maya’s goal in “Soccer Mom” was accidental.

The portrayal of Rosa as a superwoman, who could cook, clean, work at the pet shop, take care of the kids, and coach their soccer team was somehow lost on the audience. The child viewers evidently focused on those characters most like them – other children. The parent viewers, who might have identified with her, apparently did not watch enough of the program to notice all that she did. Abuela, though, was noticed by both groups of viewers. This may be explained because Abuela appears to have a little more screen time than Rosa, or perhaps this is because grandparents stir up positive feelings almost universally. They are the ones to spoil the children. Because many are retired, as Abuela appears to be, they have more time for their families. It is unfortunate, though, that most of the parents’ – particularly the mother’s – actions seem to go unnoticed by the viewers.

Portrayal of Age

Three generations are illustrated as interacting positively with one another in this text. Almost all of the adults are portrayed in a good light. This is an aspect of the show that deserves praise and attention, in my opinion, because of the rarity of seeing adults – especially kind and wise adults – in children’s programming.

The focus on the children is apparent from the introduction to the show. While Rosa, Santiago, and Abuela are pictured dancing in their apartment, the other scenes hone in on the children. Like the title suggests, Maya and Miguel are the stars of this series. Their family and friends are the supporting cast.

This focus on the children sets up a binary opposition of young and old represented in the text. The adult characters, particularly Santiago and Rosa, often fall into an “other” category because of the prominence of the children and the focus of the children’s views in the text. While I have no problem with the text centering on the children’s lives, one parent I interviewed expressed concern at the lack of supervision depicted in some episodes. It troubled me that the children often try to handle problems without ever seeking their parents’ advice or help. They do, however, often request their grandmother’s assistance. The placement of the grandmother above Rosa and Santiago was noticed by several parents, and Abuela was certainly recalled in more detail by all of the audience participants. While it pictures a very positive intergenerational relationship, the text somewhat belittles the parents’ role.

The child participants could recall much more about the young characters than the older characters, particularly Maya and Miguel, which also reflects the binary opposition of young and old. After the children, Abuela was second in the children’s memories. The frequency of appearances by the characters most likely influenced the children’s identification with them. While Maya and Miguel were in every episode, the other friends and adult relatives were not. Interestingly, Santiago and Abuela appeared in the same number of episodes within this study, yet the participants recalled much more detail about Abuela. While they described her in more depth, it is curious to me why most of them did

not appear to see similarities between her and their own grandparents. Only one mother I interviewed indicated identifying with an adult character on the program, and that was with Abuela.

Education

From the interviews of both the audience and the production team, we see evidence that television can teach. Children said that they learned Spanish from the program, and the parents confirmed that information. Children do imitate what they see and hear. For example, during the observation, CORRIE imitated Paco, Maya, and Tito. My 4-year-old son has also imitated characters, repeated lines, and picked up a few Spanish words (e.g., *delicioso*, *gracias*) from the program. Scholastic's goal of presenting language in a natural context also seems to have been met. This aspect is what first caught my eye – or ear, rather – about the program.

The question remains as to whether the children viewing the program have picked up the other lessons that Scholastic intended to share with them. Can they learn to play well with “others” if they do not recognize them as “others”? Or is that exactly what we want as a society – blindness to differences, whether they be cultural, racial, gender-based, or because of disability?

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Study

My research was limited by time and access. I would have loved to interview each writer, advisor, and producer of the program, but that dream became unrealistic. Because production of the program wrapped up soon after I began my study, in some of my interviews, the information I was requesting forced participants to search their memories.

Future research should examine this program's audience from other regions, races, ethnicities, education levels, and economic groups. I believe my study would have benefited from more Hispanic viewers, but I could not find them through my network of friends and family. My study was also limited in the similar socio-economic status and ages of my audience participants. They all appeared to fall toward the middle class and most were highly educated. They were also somewhat older mothers (35 to 50 years old). It would be interesting to discover whether younger mothers select this show for their children and if their thoughts on it differ. In addition, my participants were also residents of two southwestern cities in the same state, which could limit some variation that might be found in other regions. Future research could certainly investigate the consumption of the program in other markets. It could be particularly interesting to investigate the consumption of the program outside the United States, especially in light of the concern about the influence of U.S. media on other nations (see Cohen 2008).

The moment of regulation also deserves further investigation. Perhaps future researchers could examine this moment through interviews with the personnel from the funding agencies (e.g., U.S. Department of Education) and network (i.e., PBS).

Future studies could also examine other programs in a similar manner. Nickelodeon recently announced a program with similar goals of teaching language, representing culture, and including multi-generational interactions involving Chinese called *Ni Hau, Kai-lan*. Such a study could be quite interesting with the growth of China as a world superpower.

Before I began my research, I thought all television programs ran like commercial enterprises on the networks in that they kept producing them as long as the ratings stayed

high. In this case, and evidently in others, a pre-set number of programs are funded and created, and then the team is basically disbanded. What also surprised me, once I discovered no more than 65 episodes would be produced, was that there were still team members promoting the program on a part-time basis. The exportation of the program to more than 70 other countries was a new concept to me – especially for a program designed for Hispanic U.S. immigrants trying to learn English – and I found it interesting that the international sales of the program are used to pay back Scholastic’s investment in production.

My research also allowed me to discover how other families were consuming the program and what the children and parents thought about the show. It was fascinating to see the connections the children made with the characters – what details they remembered and what they did not. I was amazed that only one audience member addressed the issue of skin color when asked to describe the characters, and only two children mentioned a character’s disability.

Through my textual analysis of the series, there were aspects of the program I had not noticed before when viewing it as a fan/parent. I had not noticed how ditzy Chrissy is characterized, how bossy Maggie is shown, and how passive Miguel appears. I also had not picked up on the absence of discussion of Andy’s “White” culture. On the other hand, my earlier thoughts about the positive family and age depictions were confirmed.

This research helps explain the process of creating a children’s television show. This study also adds to the literature in the areas of educational television, minority portrayals (age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability), and bilingual programming. It, therefore, expands our knowledge base in these areas.

Works Cited

- Acosta-Alzuru, C., & Kreshel, P. J. (2002). "I'm an American Girl ... whatever *that* Means": Girls consuming Pleasant Company's American Girl identity. *Journal of Communication*, 52, 139–161.
- Acosta-Alzuru, C., & Roushanzamir, E. P. L. (2003). "Everything we do is a celebration of you!": Pleasant Company constructs American girlhood. *Communication Review*, 6, 45-69.
- Adorno, T., & Horkheimer, M. (1972). *Dialectic of enlightenment*. New York: Herder and Herder.
- Anderson, D. R., Huston, A. C., Schmitt, K. L., Linebarger, D. L., & Wright, J. C. (2001). Early childhood television viewing and adolescent behavior: The recontact study. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 66(1), 1-147.
- Bal, M. (1997). *Narratology: Introduction to the theory of narrative* (2nd ed.). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1989). Social cognitive theory. In R. Vasta (Ed.), *Annals of child development* (Vol. 6). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annu. Rev. Psychol.*, 52, 1-26.
- Bandura, A., Ross, D., & Ross, S. (1961). Transmission of aggression through imitation of aggressive models. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 63, 575-582.
- Bandura, A., Ross, D., & Ross, S. A. (1963). Imitation of film-mediated aggressive models. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 66, 3-11.
- Banet-Weiser, S. (2004). Girls rule!: Gender, feminism, and Nickelodeon. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 21, 119-139.
- Barrera, A. (2001). *Looking for Carrascalendas: From a Child's World to Award-Winning Television*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bennett, T., Grossberg, L., & Morris, M. (Eds.) (2005). *New keywords: A revised vocabulary of culture and society*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

- Berry, G. L. (2003). Developing children and multicultural attitudes: The systemic psychosocial influences of television portrayals in a multimedia society. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 9, 360-366.
- Bishop, J. M., & Krause, D. R. (1984). Depictions of aging and old age on Saturday morning television. *The Gerontologist*, 24, 91-94.
- Buckingham, D. (Ed.). (2002). *Small screens: Television for children*. London: Leicester University Press.
- Bucy, E. P., & Newhagen, J. E. (Eds.) (2004). *Media access: Social and psychological dimensions of new technology use*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Certain, L. K., & Kahn, R. S. (2002). Prevalence, correlates, and trajectory of television viewing among infants and toddlers. *Pediatrics*, 109, 634-642.
- Cohen, J. (2008). What I watch and who I am: National pride and the viewing of local and foreign television in Israel. *Journal of Communication*, 58(1), 149-167.
- Condit, C. (1989). The rhetorical limits of polysemy. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 6(2), p. 103-122.
- Cooney, J. (2004). *Maya & Miguel's* mosaic. *License!*, 7(4), 26-38.
- Craig, J. R., & Wilhelm, R. D. (1990). Pre-production planning: A semiotic analysis of selected educational children's television programs. *Education*, 110, 331-336.
- Crawley, A. M., Anderson, D. R., Santomero, A., Wilder, A., Williams, M. K., & Bryant, J. (2002). Do children learn how to watch television? The impact of extensive experience with *Blue's Clues* on preschool children's television viewing behavior. *Journal of Communication*, 52(2), 264-280.
- Curtin, P. A., & Gaither, T. K. (2006). Contested notions of issue identity in international public relations: A case study. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 18, 67-89.
- Curtin, P. A., & Gaither, T. K. (2005). Privileging identity, difference, and power: The circuit of culture as a basis for public relations theory. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 17, 91-115.
- Davies, M. M. (2001). *'Dear BBC': Children, television storytelling and the public sphere*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dei, L. (2003, June 3). PBS heads "Maya" way with Scholastic. *Daily Variety*, 5.

- Dennison, B. A., Erb, T. A., & Jenkins, P. L. (2002). Television viewing and television in bedroom associated with overweight risk among low-income preschool children. *Pediatrics*, 109, 1028-1035.
- Dirks, N. B. (1996). Is vice versa? Historical anthropologies and anthropological histories (pp. 17-52). In Terrence J. McDonald (Ed.), *The historic turn in the human sciences*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Dornfeld, B. (1998). *Producing public television, producing public culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Douglas, W. (2003). *Television families: Is something wrong in suburbia?* Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- du Gay, P. (Ed.) (1997). *Production of Culture/Cultures of Production*. London: Sage.
- du Gay, P., Hall, S., Janes, L., Mackay, H., & Negus, K. (1997). *Doing cultural studies: The story of the Sony Walkman*. London: Sage.
- Dyer, R. (1999). White (pp. 457-468). In J. Evans and S. Hall (Eds.) *Visual culture: The reader*. London: Sage.
- Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Evans, J. (1999a). Introduction to Part I. In Evans, J., & Hall, S. (Eds.), *Visual culture: The reader* (pp. 11-22). London: Sage.
- Evans, J. (1999b). Feeble monsters: Making up disabled people. In Evans, J., & Hall, S. (Eds.), *Visual culture: The reader* (pp. 274-288). London: Sage.
- Fisherkeller, J. (2002). *Growing up with television: Everyday learning among young adolescents*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Fiske, J. (1986). Television: polysemy and popularity. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 3(4), 391-408.
- Fiske, S. T., & Taylor, S. E. (1991). *Social cognition* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Forte, D. (Producer). (2004). *Maya & Miguel*. [Television series]. New York: Scholastic.
- Friedrich-Cofer, L. K., Huston-Stein, A., Kipnis, D. M., Susman, E. J., & Clewett, A. S. (1979). Environmental enhancement of prosocial television content: Effects on interpersonal behavior, imaginative play, and self-regulation in a natural setting. *Developmental Psychology*, 15, 637-646.

- Gentile, D. A., & Walsh, D. A. (2002). A normative study of family media habits. *Applied Developmental Psychology, 23*, 157-178.
- Gerbner, G. (1997). Gender and age in prime-time television. In S. Kirschner & D. A. Kirschner (Eds.), *Perspectives on psychology and the media* (pp. 69-94). Washington, DC: APA.
- Gerbner, G. (1999). What do we know? [forward]. In J. Shanahan & M. Morgan, *Television and its viewers: Cultivation theory and research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gerbner, G., & Gross, L. (1976). Living with television: The violence profile. *Journal of Communication, 26*, 172-199.
- Greig, A., & Taylor, J. (1999). *Doing research with children*. London: Sage.
- Hall, A. (2005). "Yes, I will accept this rose": *Representation, identity, and consumption in ABC's The Bachelor*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Georgia, Athens.
- Hall, S. (1997). The centrality of culture. In K. Thompson (Ed.), *Media and cultural regulation*, (pp. 208-238). London: Sage.
- Hall, S. (1996). Race, culture, and communications: Looking backward and forward at cultural studies. In Storey, J. (Ed.). *What is cultural studies?: A reader*. (pp. 336-343). London: Arnold.
- Hall, S. (1980a). Cultural studies and the Centre: some problematics and problems. In *Culture, media, language: Working papers in cultural studies, 1972-1979*. (p. 15-47). London: Hutchinson.
- Hall, S. (1980b). Introduction to media studies at the Centre. In *Culture, media, language: Working papers in cultural studies, 1972-1979*. (p. 117-121). London: Hutchinson.
- Hall, S. (1980c). Encoding/decoding. In *Culture, media, language: Working papers in cultural studies, 1972-1979*. (p. 128-138). London: Hutchinson.
- Hall, S. (1975). Introduction. In A. C. H. Smith, E. Immirzi & T. Blackwell, *Paper voices: The popular press and social change, 1935-1965* (pp. 11-24). Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Harwood, J., & Anderson, K. (2002). The presence and portrayal of social groups on prime-time television. *Communication Reports, 15*, 81-97.

- Highlights from the *Dragon Tales* summative evaluation. (n.d.). Retrieved April 18, 2006, from <http://www.pbs.org/readytolearn/research/dtevaluation.pdf>
- Huston, A. C., Wright, J. C., Marquis, J., & Green, S. B. (1999). How young children spend their time: Television and other activities. *Developmental Psychology*, 35, 912-925.
- Inglis, R. (2003). *The window in the corner: A half-century of children's television*. London: Peter Owen Publishers.
- Johnson, R. (1986/1987). What is cultural studies anyway? *Social Text*, 16, 38-80. Retrieved on July 24, 2007, from JSTOR.
- Johnson, R., Chambers, D., Raghuram, P., & Tincknell, E. (2004). *The practice of cultural studies*. London: Sage Publications.
- Kompare, D. (2004). *Rerun nation: How repeats invented American television*. New York: Routledge.
- Kunkel, D. (2003). The truest metric for evaluating the Children's Television Act. *Applied Developmental Psychology*, 24, 347-353.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An Introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Larson, M. S. (1993). Family communication on prime-time television. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 37, 349-357.
- Levine, E. (2001). Toward a paradigm for media production research: Behind the scenes at *General Hospital*. *Critical studies in media communication*, 18, 66-82.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2002). *Qualitative communication research methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Linebarger, D. L. (2000). Summative evaluation of *Between the Lions*: A report to WGBH Educational Foundation. Kansas City, KS: Juniper Gardens Children's Project, U. of Kansas. Retrieved on April 18, 2006, from, <http://www.pbs.org/readytolearn/research/btlkansassum.pdf>
- Mandel, J. (2006). The production of a beloved community: *Sesame Street's* answer to America's inequalities. *Journal of American Culture*, 29, 3-13.

- Mastro, D. E., Behm-Morawitz, E., & Kopacz, M. A. (2008). Exposure to television portrayals of Latinos: The implications of aversive racism and social identity theory. *Human Communication Research*, 34, 1-27.
- Mastro, D. E., & Stern, S. R. (2003). Representations of race in television commercials: A content analysis of prime-time advertising. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 47, 638-647.
- Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Miller, P. H. (2002). *Theories of developmental psychology* (4th ed.). New York: Worth.
- Minow, N. N., & LaMay, C. L. (1995). *Abandoned in the wasteland: Children, television, and the First Amendment*. New York: Hill & Wang Publishers.
- Moran, K. C. (2007). The growth of Spanish-language and Latino-themed television programs for children in the United States. *Journal of Children and Media*, 1, 294-300.
- "More PBS Kids." Retrieved on Aug. 3, 2007, from http://pbskids.org/findit/index.html?campaign=fk_all
- Morley, D. (2006). Unanswered questions in audience research. *The Communication Review*, 9, 101-121.
- Morley, D., & Silverstone, R. (1991). Communication and context: Ethnographic perspectives on the media audience. In K. B. Jensen and N. W. Jankowski (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative methodologies for mass communication research* (pp. 149-162). London: Routledge.
- Mullan, B. (1996). *Not a pretty picture: Ethnic minority views of television*. Aldershot, England: Avebury.
- Muuss, R. E. (1996). *Theories of adolescence* (6th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- National Latino Children's Institute. Retrieved on Feb. 13, 2007, from <http://www.nlci.org/DLN2004/dlnmain.htm>
- Nikken, P., & Van Der Voort, T. H. A. (1996). Maternal quality standards for children's television programs. *Journal of Educational Media*, 22, 41-54.
- Nikken, P., & Van Der Voort, T. H. A. (1997). Children's views on quality standards for children's television programs. *Journal of Educational Media*, 23, 169-186.

- Parekh, B. (1997). National culture and multiculturalism. In K. Thompson (Ed.), *Media and cultural regulation*, (pp. 164-205). London: Sage.
- Popp, R. K. (2006). Mass media and the linguistic marketplace: Media, language, and distinction. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 30, 5-20.
- “PBS KIDS backgrounder & facts.” Retrieved on April 18, 2006, from, http://www.pbs.org/aboutpbs/aboutpbs_corp_pbskids.html
- “PBS Ready to Learn.” Retrieved on April 18, 2006, from, <http://www.pbs.org/readytolearn/about/index.html>
- Price, M. A. (1998). *Beliefs and attitudes of preservice teachers during the initial teacher preparation course in secondary education: Case studies*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Texas A&M University, College Station.
- Prince, D. L., Grace, C., Linebarger, D. L., Atkinson, R., & Huffman, J. D. (2002). *Between the Lions* Mississippi literacy initiative: A final report to Mississippi Educational Television. Report prepared for Mississippi Educational Television and WGBH Educational Foundation. Starkville, MS: The Early Childhood Institute, Mississippi State University.
- Ramos, J. (2005, November). Maya, Miguel and the future of Latinos. *Eco Latino magazine: The Northeast Georgia Bilingual Publication*, 3(8). Retrieved on Dec. 20, 2007, from <http://www.athensecolatino.com/v3n8/ramos.html>
- Reisberg, D. (2006). *Cognition: Exploring the science of the mind* (3rd ed.). New York: Norton
- Rice, M. L., Huston, A. C., Truglio, R., & Wright, J. C. (1990). Words from “Sesame Street”: Learning vocabulary while viewing. *Developmental Psychology*, 26, 421-428.
- Rideout, V. J., Vandewater, E. A., & Wartella, E. A. (2003, October 28). *Zero to Six: Electronic media in the lives of infants, toddlers and preschoolers*. A Kaiser Family Foundation report. Retrieved April 18, 2006, from, <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/upload/Zero-to-Six-Electronic-Media-in-the-Lives-of-Infants-Toddlers-and-Preschoolers-PDF.pdf>
- Rossman, G., & Rallis, S. (2003). *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ryan, E. L. (2007, August). *Dora the Explorer*: Giving power to preschoolers, girls, and Latinas. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Washington, DC. Retrieved on Dec. 24, 2007, from AEJMC.

- Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Schmitt, K. L., Woolf, K. D., & Anderson, D. R. (2003). Viewing the viewers: Viewing behaviors by children and adults during television. *Journal of Communication*, 53, 265-281.
- Sigler, E. (2004). *Maya & Miguel*: The latest bilingual kids' show features twins. *Hispanic*, 17(12), 68.
- Signorielli, N. (2004). Aging on television: Messages relating to gender, race, and occupation in prime time. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 48, 279-301.
- Smith, D. (2006). Cartoon culture: How *Maya and Miguel* excel beyond the 1990 Children's Television Act. In L. Wilson (Ed.), *Americana: Readings in Popular Culture*. Hollywood: Press Americana.
- Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stam, R., & Shohat, E. (1994). Contested histories: Eurocentrism, multiculturalism, and the media. In D. T. Goldberg (Ed.), *Multiculturalism: A critical reader*, (pp. 296-324). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Storey, J. (Ed.). (1996). *What is cultural studies?: A reader*. London: Arnold.
- Taylor, B. C., Demont-Heinrich, C., Broadfoot, K. J., Dodge, J., & Jian, G. (2002). New media and the circuit of cyber-culture: Conceptualizing Naptster. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 46, 607-629.
- Tomlinson, J. (1997). Internationalism, globalization and cultural imperialism. In K. Thompson (Ed.), *Media and cultural regulation*, (pp. 118-162). London: Sage.
- U. S. Census Bureau. (n.d.) *U.S. Census Bureau Fact Sheet*. Retrieved December 8, 2007, from http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFFacts?_event=&ActiveGeoDiv=geoSelect&pctxt=fph&_lang=en&_sse=on&geo_id=16000US4845000&_state=04000US48
- U. S. Census Bureau. (2007). *U.S. Census Bureau State and County QuickFacts*. Retrieved December 8, 2007, from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48/4845744.html> and <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48/4845000.html>

- Williams, R. (1961/2003). The analysis of culture (pp. 28-50). In Chris Jenks (Ed.) *Culture: Critical concepts in sociology*. London: Routledge.
- Williams, R. (1974/1989). Drama in a dramatized society. In Alan O'Connor (Ed.) *Raymond Williams on television: Selected writings* (pp. 3-13). London: Routledge.
- Wright, J. C., Huston, A. C., Murphy, K. C., St. Peters, M., Pinon, M., Scantlin, R., & Kotler, J. (2001). The relations of early television viewing to school readiness and vocabulary of children from low-income families: The early window project. *Child Development*, 72, 1347-1366.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd edition). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.

Appendix A
Consent Form

We are asking you to participate in a research project involving the children's program "Maya & Miguel." Emily Kinsky, a Ph.D. student in the College of Mass Communications, is conducting the study, while Dr. Amanda Gallagher, of the College of Mass Communications at Texas Tech, is supervising the research. Both researchers may be contacted at 742-3385.

The purpose of the project is to examine the reactions and interactions of children as they watch the Scholastic program "Maya & Miguel" aired locally on PBS. If you agree to participate, the researcher will observe and/or interview your child(ren) in your home as he/she/they watch the program "Maya and Miguel." The researcher will observe for an approximate total of one hour, with 15 minutes before and after the program. Interviews will last an hour at most.

You will be given the opportunity to discuss your feelings and attitudes toward "Maya & Miguel" and contribute to future research in this area of television studies. The interviewer may record your comments on a tape recorder as well as take notes. All information will be documented under an assumed name to protect your privacy.

Your information will be stored in a computer under an assumed name. Mrs. Kinsky will have access to the information under password protection.

Participating in this observation and/or interview is completely up to you. There are no expected risks or discomforts. No one can force you to participate, and you won't lose anything if you decide not to do so. You may quit at any time and not be penalized.

- ☐ I agree to be interviewed.
- ☐ I agree to be observed.
- ☐ I agree to allow my child(ren) to be interviewed.
- ☐ I agree to allow my child(ren) to be observed.

Mrs. Kinsky or Dr. Gallagher will answer any questions you have about the study. For questions about your rights as a participant or about injuries caused by this research, contact the Texas Tech University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Office of Research Services, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas 79409. Or you can call (806) 742-3884.

If you sign this sheet, it means that you read this form and that all of your questions were answered.

Signature of participant

Date

This consent form is not valid after February 28, 2008.

Appendix B
Children's Assent Form

We are asking you to be a part of a research project about the program "Maya & Miguel." We would like to sit with you as you watch the show and ask you a few questions about what you think about "Maya & Miguel."

If you agree to be a part of the study, Mrs. Kinsky will observe you in your home as you watch "Maya and Miguel." Mrs. Kinsky will observe for about an hour, with 15 minutes before and after the program.

Whatever Mrs. Kinsky writes down about you will be entered into a computer under a different name so that no one will know it was you.

Taking part in this project is completely up to you. No one can force you to participate, and you won't lose anything if you decide not to do so. You may quit at any time and not be hurt in any way.

Mrs. Kinsky or Dr. Gallagher will answer any questions you have about the study. For questions about your rights as a participant or about injuries caused by this research, contact the Texas Tech University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Office of Research Services, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas 79409. Or you can call (806) 742-3884.

If you sign this sheet, it means that you read this form and that all of your questions were answered.

Signature of participant

Date

This assent form is not valid after February 28, 2008.

Appendix C

Consent Form for Personnel of Scholastic

We are asking you to participate in a research project involving the children's program "Maya & Miguel." Emily Kinsky, a Ph.D. student in the College of Mass Communications, is conducting the study, while Dr. Amanda Gallagher, of the College of Mass Communications at Texas Tech, is supervising the research. Both researchers may be contacted at 742-3385.

The purpose of the project is to examine the Scholastic program "Maya & Miguel" aired on PBS. If you agree to participate, the researcher will interview you about your role and thoughts about "Maya and Miguel." Interviews will last an hour at most.

You will be given the opportunity to discuss your feelings and attitudes toward "Maya & Miguel" and contribute to future research in this area of television studies. The interviewer will record your comments on a tape recorder as well as take notes.

Your information will be stored in a computer. If you would prefer, you can remain anonymous to protect your privacy, and your data will be recorded under an assumed name. Mrs. Kinsky will have access to the information under password protection.

Please check one:

- ☐ You may use my name.
- ☐ I would prefer to remain anonymous.

Participating in this observation and/or interview is completely up to you. There are no expected risks or discomforts. No one can force you to participate, and you won't lose anything if you decide not to do so. You may quit at any time and not be penalized.

Mrs. Kinsky or Dr. Gallagher will answer any questions you have about the study. For questions about your rights as a participant or about injuries caused by this research, contact the Texas Tech University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Office of Research Services, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas 79409. Or you can call (806) 742-3884.

If you sign this sheet, it means that you read this form and that all of your questions were answered.

Signature of participant

Date

This consent form is not valid after February 28, 2008.

Appendix D
Interview Guide for Children

1. When did you start watching “Maya & Miguel”? [consumption]
2. Do you remember what prompted you to watch? (friend, promotion, etc.?)
[consumption]
3. Why do you watch “Maya & Miguel”? [consumption/identity]
4. Why do you think other kids watch the show? [consumption/identity]
5. If you had to describe it to someone who’s never seen it, what would you tell them the show is about? [identity/representation]
6. How does it compare to other shows? [identity/representation/production]
7. How often do you watch the show? [consumption]
8. When you watch, do family members watch it with you? Do they stay in the room the whole time? [consumption]
9. Do you ever talk about the show with your family?
[consumption/identity/regulation]
10. What do you like about the show? [identity]
11. What do you not like about the show? [identity]
12. What are your favorite parts of the show? [identity]
13. What are your favorite episodes? [identity]
14. What do you think about Maya? Miguel? Their mother? Their father? Their grandmother? Tito? Paco? Chrissy? Maggie? Theo? Andy?
[identity/representation]
15. Do the characters seem real? Are they like anyone else you know?
[identity/representation]
16. What do you think about the use of Spanish on the show?
[consumption/identity/representation]
17. How does Maya and Miguel’s family compare to yours? [identity/representation]

18. What do you think about their family and the things they're shown doing?
[identity/representation]
19. Do your friends watch "Maya & Miguel"? [consumption/identity/regulation]
20. Do you ever talk about it at school or when you're with your friends?
[consumption/identity/regulation]
21. Do you ever watch the show with your friends? [consumption/identity/regulation]
22. What other shows do you watch? [consumption/identity]
23. What are your favorite TV shows? [consumption/identity]
24. Have you ever bought a "Maya & Miguel" product? (doll, book, toy, etc.) Have
you noticed any in the store or at your friends' houses?
[consumption/identity/regulation]
25. There are sponsor promos between the shows on PBS. Which ones do you
remember? What do you remember about them? What did you think about them?
[consumption/identity]
26. What do you think the show's message is? [identity/representation]

Appendix E
Interview Guide for Parents

1. When did you and/or your children start watching “Maya & Miguel”?
[consumption]
2. Why did you and/or your children begin watching the show? Did anyone talk to you about the show that influenced you to watch it? [consumption]
3. How would you describe the show if you had to describe it to someone who hasn’t seen it? [identity/representation]
4. Why do your children watch “Maya & Miguel” now? [consumption/identity]
5. Why do you think other children watch the show? [consumption/identity]
6. Do you watch with them? If so, how often? (days per week) How much time per episode? Do you do other things while you watch (dishes, bills, cleaning, etc.), or do you leave the room to do other things while they watch? [consumption]
7. How often do they watch the show? (days per week, amount of each episode)
[consumption]
8. Would you consider yourself a fan of the show? [identity]
9. Have you ever purchased or collected anything related to “Maya & Miguel”?
(dolls, books, toys, magazines) [consumption/identity/regulation]
10. What do you like about the show? [identity]
11. What do you not like about the show? [identity]
12. How does it compare to other programs? [identity]
13. What are your favorite parts of the show? [identity]
14. What are your favorite episodes? [identity]
15. What do you think about Maya? Miguel? Their mother? Their father? Their grandmother? Tito? Paco? Chrissy? Maggie? Theo? Andy?
[identity/representation]
16. How realistic are the portrayals of the parents, children, relatives, teachers, etc.?
[identity/representation]

17. What do you think about the use of Spanish on the show? [identity/representation]
18. How does Maya and Miguel's family compare to yours? [identity]
19. What do you think about their family and the things they're shown doing?
[identity/representation]
20. What do you think the show's overall message, or messages, are?
[identity/representation]
21. If you had the power to see into the future, what would you see the future of
"Maya & Miguel" looking like? [identity]
22. How important is television to you and your family? [consumption]
23. How much TV do you watch on an average weekday? Average weekend?
Yesterday? [consumption]
24. How much TV do your kids watch on an average weekday? Average weekend?
Yesterday? [consumption]
25. What other shows do your kids watch? [consumption]
26. What do you think about the sponsor promotions before and after the show? Do
you remember who sponsors "M&M"? What do you think about the sponsors
themselves? What have you noticed about the promotions themselves?
[consumption/identity/representation]

Appendix F

Interview Guide for Scholastic Personnel

[the key circuit of culture moment under investigation via this interview is “production”]

1. When did you begin working on the show? (from the beginning?)
2. Tell me more about the process of creating the show. What is your role?
3. Why do you work on “Maya & Miguel”? What are your goals?
4. How would you describe the show to someone who is unfamiliar with it?
5. How is it different from other programs?
6. How do you see this show fitting in with PBS’ overall programming?
7. Why do you think children watch the show?
8. Do you have children who watch the show? If so, how often? What do you hope they’ll gain from it?
9. What do you hope other viewing children will gain from watching?
10. What are your favorite characters?
11. What are your favorite episodes?
12. What do you think about Maya? Miguel? Their mother? Their father? Their grandmother? Tito? Paco? Chrissy? Maggie? Theo? Andy?
13. What are your thoughts behind the use of Spanish on the show? How do you decide when to use Spanish? And who will be speaking?
14. What are your thoughts behind the portrayal of Maya and Miguel’s family? Are their specific guidelines given as to their portrayal?
15. What are your thoughts behind the portrayal of Andy? Are there specific goals in mind for the presentation of a physically disabled character? If so, what are they?
16. Have you seen the sponsor promos used before the program? What do you think of them?
17. What would you say are the overall messages from the show?

18. How important is TV in your personal life?
19. How much do you watch on weekdays, weekends, yesterday? What are your favorite programs?
20. Where would you like “Maya & Miguel” to go in the future?

Appendix G

Interview/Observation Participants

FLINT family

CORRIE, 5 years old, sat across from me at the oak dinner table. She actually began talking about the show before I could turn my tape recorder on. She was excited about the show and quite a talker. She smiled almost constantly. She remembered – or at least shared – many more details about the show than her sister did. She was wearing a blue sundress with blue and white whales on it. She held her blankie with her at the table and would sometimes pretend it was a snake or a giant snail. While her sister was interviewed she had evidently drawn a picture for me.

NIKI, 7 years old, was wearing a light purple t-shirt with pastel flowers in an oval on the front with the word paradise. She wore a necklace with a black strap and silver cross inside an oval (sort of) – her mom later told me she got the necklace at Taco Bell. She was very curious and seemed to be self-conscious.

MARCIA, 40+ years old, is married and is the mother of two girls they adopted from China. She is a mass communications professor and her husband is a soccer coach. She recently got a job in another town, so their home is currently on the market. This likely affected how the house was arranged. We sat across from each other at the oak table. We began the interview before *Maya & Miguel*, but had to stop when the show began. We finished our interview after the show. **MARCIA** wore a blue t-shirt, jeans, and black Birkenstock sandals. During the interview, I often stopped the tape recorder when her daughters came in the room needing her attention. We were often interrupted as the girls went in and out of the house or got into arguments or wanted something to eat or drink.

KROFT family

SYDNEY, 39; married; 3 kids; homemaker; teaches her children at home; Christian; once served as a foreign missionary to Dominican Republic

MARTY (observed in pilot study on 3.3.2006), married to Sydney, 3 kids, works as an engineer at a television station; Christian

HOLLY, 10-year-old girl, oldest child in the KROFT family; homeschooled; Christian

MARSHALL, 8-year-old boy, middle child in the KROFT family; homeschooled; Christian.

WILL, 8-year-old Caucasian boy; married parents; father works as an engineer for KTXT-TV; one older brother (10), one older sister (11); schooled at home by his mother who was a public elementary school teacher; he and his parents (and probably grandparents) were born and raised in Lubbock. He has recently moved to a new house. WILL wore a light blue t-shirt with a logo from *The Chronicles of Narnia* and darker blue shorts. I once attended church with him and his family. We are still in contact every few weeks or so. Family is Christian.

RATNARAJA family

RANJAN, 5-year-old boy; Sri Lankan descent; married parents; both parents are finishing their doctorate degrees; stays with another Sri Lankan family (referred to by his mother as the “babysitter”) while parents are at work/school; one younger sibling with another on the way; lives in a duplex; he wore a red t-shirt and jean shirts; he wears glasses; has dark brown hair. I met RANJAN’s mother on the bus coming to school on the Number 5 bus. We saw each other every day and began to talk about our areas of research. When I found out her son watched *Maya & Miguel*, I asked if I could interview and observe him. That was my first time in their home. Family is Hindu.

SANUTHI, 34, mother of two with another soon on the way; will also defend her dissertation soon; works on university campus; about to move; husband just completed his Ph.D. as well. From Sri Lanka. Hindu. Rides the bus to school/work.

WOOD family

CHRIS, 12 years old, she’s an only child, although she does have a much older step-sister (around 40 years old). She has braces and freckles. She’s wearing a kelly green t-shirt, dark green pants with a lime green border at the hem. Her shirt says “Green Day. Kiss me, I’m punk!” with a shamrock with safety pins in it. Her hair was recently dyed to a shade of red in honor of her 12th birthday on Monday.

JANET, 50 years old, married, one biological child and one older step-child, employed at TTU

CLIFT family

ELOY, Hispanic 5-year-old boy; Christian family; one younger brother;

ANNA, 35; Hispanic; mother of two boys; works for a Christian radio ministry; has master’s degree; husband works in travel industry

Appendix H

More about *Maya & Miguel's* Major Characters

Maya Santos – 10-year-old girl; twin sister of Miguel; Hispanic; mother is Mexican descent; father is Puerto Rican descent; loves animals; known for her big ideas that often go awry; bilingual; she and her friends Maggie and Chrissy call themselves *Las Tres Amigas*

Miguel Santos – 10-year-old boy; twin brother of Maya; Hispanic; mother is Mexican descent; father is Puerto Rican descent; loves animals; known for her big ideas; bilingual; loves sports (soccer, baseball, basketball); likes to draw; likes to play drums

Rosa Santos – mother of Maya and Miguel; Mexican descent; owns a pet shop; coaches Maya and Miguel's soccer team in one episode

Santiago Santos – father of Maya and Miguel; Puerto Rican descent; owns a pet shop; shown taking the kids to a movie and a museum

Abuela Elena Chavez (aka Abuelita) – grandmother of Maya and Miguel; moved from Mexico; widow; likes to cook; once owned a restaurant with her late husband, Ernesto; has at least two children – Rosa and Ernesto; Internet savvy; member of a book club; shown with a romantic interest in Señor Felipe, the mailman, in at least two episodes

Tito – cousin of Maya and Miguel who moves from Mexico with his parents, Teresa and Ernesto; actual name is Alberto

Paco – pet parrot of Maya and Miguel; used for repetition of words and humor

Maggie – friend of Maya; loves to dance; Chinese descent; interested in fashion

Chrissy – friend of Maya; Afro-Dominican descent

Andy – friend of Miguel; loves sports; with a physical disability; moved from Wisconsin; Caucasian

Theo – friend of Miguel; loves to read; plays sports; fascinated by sci-fi; the “brain” of the group; often shown as an inventor; African American

Appendix I

Textual Analysis Guide

[illegible]

Appendix J

Episodes Evaluated in Textual Analysis

The episode number assigned by Scholastic is in parentheses.

When Maya Met Andy (#103)

Andy moves in across the street. Maya decides to throw a welcome party for him and does not realize he has a disability until he shows up for the party. When they see his arm, most of the children do not know how to act. Maya takes sensitivity too far and treats Andy as if he cannot do anything. Maya learns from Miguel's treatment of Andy as a normal person.

La Nueva Cocinita (#106)

When the neighborhood is down in the dumps from a long rainy spell, Maya decides to open a restaurant in their apartment using Abuela's old recipes from her restaurant, La Cocinita. As usual, things go awry and Abuela steps in to help.

Soccer Mom (#120)

When Maya and Miguel's soccer coach goes pro, Maya suggests that Rosa take his place. Miguel does not like the idea of combining home and soccer and convinces Maya to help him get rid of their mom as coach. Rosa comes back to coach the last minutes of their playoff game and leads them to victory.

A Little Culture (#124)

Maya, Miguel, Theo, and Maggie set off to see the opening day of a new sci-fi movie. When they arrive, they realize Maya forgot to buy the tickets. They agree to go across the street with Mr. Santos so that he can see the exhibits on Ancient Cultures that he wanted to see. Maggie learns about Ancient China, Theo learns about West Africa, and the twins spend their time in the gift shop looking for something to make up for missing the movie.

Friends Forever? (#128)

Las tres amigas get into an argument over their book report. After mocking their friendship problems, the three boys have their own argument over Miguel secretly coaching both Andy and Theo for a particular position on the soccer team.

The Pen Pal (#132)

Miguel gets a pen pal in Puerto Rico. He makes the mistake of lying about his life trying to make it sound more exciting, and then he finds out the pen pal is coming for a visit. He asks Maya to help him and the children try to pretend all of the lies were true. In the end, Miguel and his pen pal learn that telling the truth is important.

Give me a Little Sign (# 139)

A new student joins Tito's class at school. His name is Marco and he is deaf. A number of ASL signs are taught and repeated in English and/or Spanish. Tito is encouraged about his accent by Abuela.

Miguel's Wonderful Life (#142)

After a day of Maya's mistakes, Miguel wishes she were gone. He awakes to find his wish has come true, but then notices how much Maya helped the people around her.

A Rose is Still a Rose (#145)

Abuela leaves town with Maya in charge of taking care of her prize rose before the big competition. Maya expects the roses to grow quickly and ends up destroying the prize rose. Miguel wants to learn wrestling but expects Señor Lopez to teach him the fancy moves right away. Both twins learn more about patience.

Role Reversal (#146)

Santiago and Rosa decide their children have an easy life, while Maya and Miguel imagine the same is true about their parents. Maya suggests they change places for the day, and in the end, they appreciate one another and realize that everyone faces challenges.

After School (#147)

Maggie runs late to school. She argues for Mr. Nguyen not to spoil her perfect record with a tardy and ends up with an "after school" detention.

The Perfect Thanksgiving (#152) [online called: The Best Thanksgiving Ever]

Santiago's mother comes from Puerto Rico to spend Thanksgiving with them. Maya and the rest of the family try to pull off a perfect holiday, but they discover that just being together is what makes the day special.

Appendix K

Entire List of *Maya & Miguel* Episodes

101	Mala Suerte	134	Fashionistas
102	The Matchmaker	135	Maya Quixote and Miguel Panza
103	When Maya Met Andy	136	The Taming of Mr. Shue
104	The Autograph	137	Tito's Pet
105	Rhymes with "Gato"	138	Real Twins
106	La Nueva Cocinita	139	Give Me a Little Sign
107	The Letter	140	A Star is Born
108	Teacher's Pet	141	Paper Girl
109	La Calavera	142	Miguel's Wonderful Life
110	Politics Unusual	143	The Video
111	Tito's Mexican Vacation	144	Decisions, Decisions
112	Prince Tito	145	A Rose is Still a Rose
113	The Bully and the Bunny	146	Role Reversal
114	Family Time	147	After School
115	Surprise, Surprise	148	The Wedding
116	An Okri-Dokey Day	149	Puppy Love
117	Chrissy's Big Move	150	Mother's Day
118	Career Day	151	The Big Fight
119	I've Got to Be Mi-guel	152	The Perfect Thanksgiving (aka The Best Thanksgiving Ever)
120	Soccer Mom	153	Cupid
121	The Adventures of Rabbit-Bird Man	154	Papi Joins the Band
122	Maya and Miguel, Come on Down!	155	Crushed
123	The Wrestler Next Door	156	The Red Jacket
124	A Little Culture	157	Maya the Mascot
125	The Bet	158	Good Luck Paco
126	The Cheery Chipper	159	Paging Dr. Maya
	Cupid Sisters	160	The Battle of Birthdays
127	Team Santos	161	Say Cheese!
128	Friends Forever?	162	A House Divided
129	The Slump	163	Every Day is Earth Day
130	The Dogwalkers	164	The Big Idea
131	Recipe for Disaster	165	I Love Maya
132	The Pen Pal		
133	Abuela Upmanship		

Appendix L

PBS Kids Programs

Downloaded Aug. 3, 2007, from

http://pbskids.org/findit/index.html?campaign=fk_all

Arthur
Barney & Friends
Berenstain Bears
Between the Lions
Boohbah
Caillou
Clifford
Curious George
Cyberchase
Dragonfly TV
Dragon Tales
Fetch!
Franny's Feet
George Shrinks
Jakers! The Adventures of Piggley Winks
Jay Jay the Jet Plane
It's a Big Big World
Maya & Miguel
Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood
Make Way for Noddy
Postcards from Buster
Reading Rainbow
Sagwa
Sesame Street
Teletubbies
Zoboomafoo
ZOOM

Appendix M

PBS Kids Go!

Downloaded Aug. 3, 2007, from

http://pbskids.org/go/more.html?campaign=list_more

Africa for Kids
African American World for Kids
American Experience: Wayback
Arthur
Backyard Jungle
Big Apple History
Cyberchase
Democracy Project
Design Squad
Don't Buy It
Dragonfly TV
EekoWorld
Fetch!
Get Your Web License
History Detectives
It's My Life
Jazz
Kids World Sports
Kratts' Creatures
Maya & Miguel
News Flash 5
Not for Ourselves Alone
Postcards from Buster
Wonders of the African World
WordGirl
ZOOM

Appendix N
PBS Ready to Learn

Involves electronic programs games Web sites, and other learning resources particularly focused on children aged 2 to 8 with the goal of increasing literacy.

As of Aug. 3, 2007, two programs were listed as “featured programs” on the Ready to Learn Web site (<http://www.pbs.org/readytolearn/programs.html>): Between the Lions and Sesame Street. The site also listed upcoming shows:

2007 – *SuperWhy!* And *Word World*

2008 – *Martha Speaks* and *The Electric Company*

Appendix O

Audit Trail

1 Beth Richman –	phone interview 12.9.2005, e-mails received: 10.10.2005, 10.27.2005, 10.28.2005, 10.31.2005, 11.1.2005, 12.5.2005, 12.9.2005, 12.20.2005, 12.21.2005, 3.7.2006, 3.22.2006 (last e-mail from Scholastic), 3.27.2007, 10.15.2007, 2.5.2008
2 SYDNEY –	observed 3.3.2006 and 4.18.2007; interviewed 4.3.2006
3 HOLLY –	observed 3.3.2006; interviewed 4.3.2006
4 MARSHALL –	observed 3.3.2006; interviewed 4.3.2006
5 WILL –	observed 3.3.2006 and 4.18.2007; interviewed 4.18.2007
6 JANET –	observed and interviewed 4.14.2006
7 CHRIS –	observed and interviewed 4.14.2006
8 MARCIA –	observed and interviewed 5.24.2006
9 NIKI –	observed and interviewed 5.24.2006
10 CORRIE –	observed and interviewed 5.24.2006
11 SANUTHI –	observed and interviewed 7.21.2006
12 RANJAN –	observed and interviewed 7.21.2006
13 ANNA –	observed and interviewed in person 11.10.2007
14 ELOY –	observed and interviewed in person 11.10.2007
15 Mindy Figueroa –	e-mail interview 9.15.2006; phone interview 12.7.2007; e-mails received: 4.17.2006, 8.17.2006, 8.23.2006, 9.15.2006, 12.19.2006, 11.3.2007, 11.6.2007, 11.28.2007, 1.7.2008, 2.8.2008, 2.11.2008
16 Cheryl Gotthelf –	e-mail interview 9.15.2006; e-mail received: 2.5.2008
17 Federico Subervi –	phone interview 11.27.2007
18 Linda Kahn –	e-mail of international sales information 1.7.2008; telephone interview 3.27.2008

Appendix P
Actors/Actresses

“Maya Santos” – Candi Milo

“Miguel Santos” – Nika Futterman

“Rosa Santos” – Elizabeth Peña

“Santiago Santos” – Carlos Ponce

“Abuela Elena Chavez” – Lupe Ontiveros

“Paco” – Carlos Alazraqui

“Alberto ‘Tito’ Chavez” – Candi Milo

“Chrissy” – Elizabeth Payne

“Maggie” – Lucy Liu

“Andy” – Jeannie Elias

“Theo” – Jerod Mixon

“Senor Felipe” – Erik Estrada

Appendix Q
Theme Song Lyrics

It's Maya (it's Maya) and Miguel (and Miguel),
What they will do next you never can tell
It's Maya (it's Maya) and Miguel (Miguel),
Brother and sister, and best friends as well
With each misadventure they're put to the test,
Working together is what they do best
Helping their family and friends, that's the start
They make a great team as they each do their part⁹
It's Maya, (it's Maya) and Miguel (Miguel),
What they will do next you never can tell
It's Maya, (it's Maya) and Miguel (Miguel)
Brother and sister, and best friends as well
Brother and sister, Maya and Miguel

⁹ In the first season, this line was “He leads with his head and she follows her heart.” According to Figueroa (personal communication, Dec. 7, 2007), after a parent shared the concern of stereotyping girls, the lyrics were changed.

Appendix R
International Sales of *Maya & Miguel*

Regions which have purchased the program from Scholastic Media

Africa	Middle East
Asia	Montenegro
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Philippines
Canada	Portugal
Croatia	Romania
Czech Republic	Serbia
France	Slovakia
Hungary	South Africa
Indonesia	Spain
Israel	Turkey
Latin America	UK
Macedonia	United States Armed Forces

According to Linda Kahn, Senior Vice President
International TV Sales & Merchandising, Scholastic Media
(personal communication, Jan. 7, 2008)